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Kent on Sunday

www.kentnews.co.uk August 14, 2016
North & West edition No 725

CRIME

Is gang behind fruit thefts?

Strawberries and cherries pinched across county

HISTORY

When hopping ruled the fields

Fascinating look back at how they brought in the hops

TRANSPORT

All roads lead to Dover

County council unveils £400m plan to spread the load heading into the port

GUIDE

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Spare a thought for our under pressure villages

IF YOU want to ensure a heated discussion in a pub or around any dinner table, simply mention some of Kent's transport issues.

Whether it is memories of the pain of Operation Stack, the delays at reaching Dover or crossing the Dartford Crossing, or traversing the likes of Maidstone or Tunbridge Wells at rush hour, everyone will have a gripe to share. And let's not even talk about the county's trains.

But while Kent County Council this week published its 'wishlist' of projects it wants funding for in order to allow Kent to breathe and develop given the steady population rise, surely the biggest issue, and one which is now so established it has slipped down that list of primary complaints, is how the sheer weight of vehicles on our roads have changed so many places forever.

Come off the main thoroughfares and there are few rural or inner town areas where simply driving down the road doesn't involve both skill and a healthy dollop of luck, not to loose your wing mirror.

Some of our most picturesque villages - so pretty to look at - have become known primarily for the cars lining their streets and the tightness of bends and passing places, rather than their historical and architectural splendour. And while we should be grateful, at least, they still exist, you cannot but help think it has been fundamentally spoiled by the thunder of relentless traffic.

There is no solution to this, of course. Public transport is simply too unreliable, indirect and underfunded for it to offer a genuine alternative here, at least. Instead all we can hope is that should more roads get built, some of our villages get to flourish again.

Editor **Chris Britcher**

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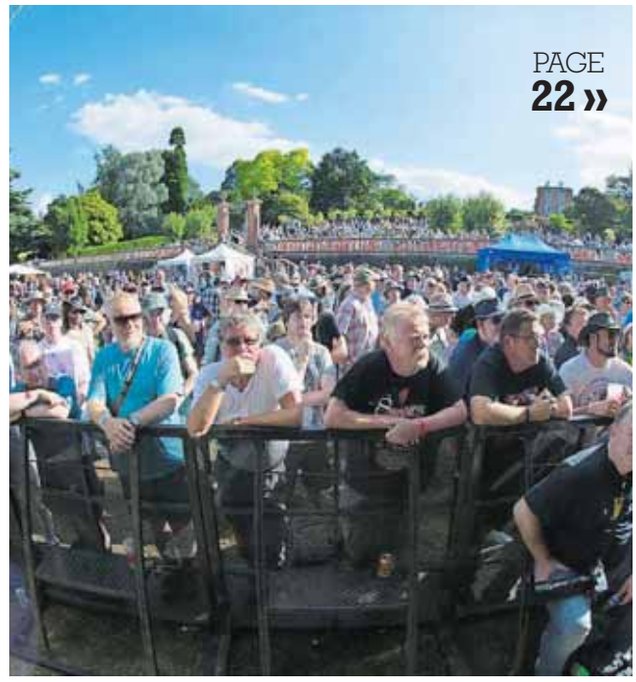

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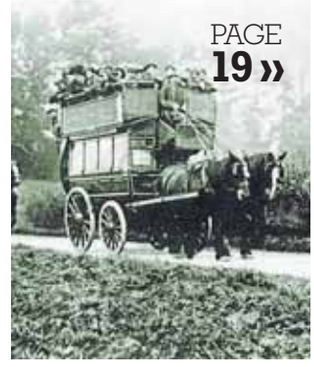

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Going for gold: County's big names take to track

By Luke May
luke.may@archant.co.uk

VENUE: Athletics is set to take centre stage at Rio this week at the Olympic Games

AFTER all the expectation and hype now is the time to deliver for our sporting superstars as they head onto the track at the Rio Olympic Games in pursuit of gold medals and glory.

This week saw Kent's first medal as Cranbrook rugby ace Ruaridh McConnochie won silver in the first ever outing of rugby sevens at the Games.

Great Britain defied the odds to reach the final on Thursday night, but lost out to hot favourites Fiji. But it didn't deny our Kent hero a silver medal.

But there was disappointment for equestrian star William Fox-Pitt, who went to school in Broadstairs, who started his eventing dressage in gold medal position, but then a bad round saw him fall from contention.

This weekend sees a host of other medal-hopefuls from the county continue their campaigns - full details of which can be found in our sports section.

The main focus, however, will be on the track as the athletics programme gets under way and we get our first glimpse of the likes of Dartford's Adam Gemili, 23, and Orpington's Dina Asher-Smith, 20.

Both rising young talents are hotly-tipped to perform well and will compete with the support of their local communities behind them.

Mr Gemili's heats in the 200m begin on Tuesday at 3.50pm. If he makes the final, it will be at the early hour of 2.30am UK time on Friday.

He is also competing in the men's 4x100m relay.

Dartford council leader Jeremy Kite said: "He's a great ambassador for Dartford and we're all hoping he does really well. You couldn't ask for a nicer guy - we're just so proud of him."

Miss Asher-Smith, who holds the British record in the women's 200m, gets her heats under way on Monday with the final on Thursday.

"If I want to be competitive and push my boundaries I try and realistically think that I'm going to win," she said on arriving in Rio.

She, like Mr Gemili, is a member of Blackheath and Bromley Harriers Athletics Club.

Both will be looking to emulate Kent's greatest Olympian - Dame Kelly Holmes - who won gold in the 800m and 1,500m in Athens in 2004.

Jail for crook who got into woman's car as she stopped at the lights

A ROBBER who climbed into a woman's car while she was stopped at traffic lights has been jailed for three years and four months.

Simon Boswell, 34, of Winchester Way, Gillingham, stole his victim's handbag and also took a man's wallet in a separate incident days later.

He was sentenced at Maidstone Crown Court on Friday having pleaded guilty to two counts of robbery at an earlier hearing.

The court heard how on May 2 at about 9.45pm, Boswell opened the door of a car that had stopped at traffic lights on Chatham Hill, Gillingham, at the junction with Rock Avenue.

He grabbed the driver's handbag and tried to wrestle it away from her, and then climbed into the vehicle when the lights turned green and she began to drive away.

The woman pulled over a short distance further and shouted at Boswell to take the handbag and get out. He then left the scene in possession of the bag, which contained a tablet computer, a purse and various other items.

Later that week, on May 7, Boswell followed a customer out of a petrol station on Nelson Road, Gillingham, and attempted to snatch his wallet on the forecourt.

He then made off with £40 cash following a brief struggle that left the victim requiring hospital treatment for cuts and bruises. Boswell was identified through CCTV footage of the incident and arrested three days later.

Investigating officer, detective constable Ian Mather, said: "Simon Boswell is an opportunistic thief who needs no invitation to take items that do not belong to him.

"He does not discriminate against his victims and is equally at home robbing a man on a petrol forecourt as he is climbing into a woman's car while she is driving alone at night.

"Boswell clearly poses a risk to members of the public and is better off behind bars."

Uni rush ready as A-level results due this Thursday

NERVOUS teenagers will find out their A-level results this week and for many it will herald the start of a dash to secure a university place.

Results are published on Thursday, with many reliant on certain grades to ensure they secure the university degree course they want, or the job or apprenticeship they have pinned their hopes on.

Last year the county scored above the national average when it came to point scores per entrant, but below on the percentage of students achieving three A-levels.

Those getting better, or worse, grades than expected for university can apply through the clearing process in a bid to secure a place for later this year. See the UCAS site for further details.

It's going to get hot...but not for long, then the rain's back

TEMPERATURES are set to soar across the south east early next week - but the mini heatwave is set to be shortlived, with thunder and heavy rain expected hot on its heels.

On Monday and Tuesday, forecasters say we could be sweltering again.

A Met Office spokesman explained: "Early next week looks predominantly dry and sunny with temperatures rising, possibly becoming hot across parts of the south.

"The heat looks short-lived though as Atlantic fronts edge in from the west by midweek. This will bring a risk of thunderstorms and heavy rain for a time, with cooler, fresher conditions becoming established by the latter part of the week."

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seven days

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Friends bid farewell to Herald assistant bosun

FRIENDS and family bid a final farewell to popular former Bromley Green football coach and player Mark Stanley this week.

The former ferry worker found himself at the centre of tragedy in 1987 as the assistant bosun who left the bow doors open on the doomed Herald of Free Enterprise ferry which sank at Zeebrugge in 1987, killing 193 people.

Father-of-two Mr Stanley, 58, who lived in Ashford, was seen by many as a scapegoat for a catalogue of safety failings and later inquiries praised him for much of his efforts on the night as the drama unfolded.

He passed away on July 20 and was cremated on Wednesday in Charing.

Criticism fired at chief constable's £199k salary and holiday allowance

By Chris Murphy
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

KENT Police's chief constable has been slammed by the Taxpayers' Alliance for the size of his pay packet and holiday allowance.

It follows findings published in the Daily Mail which said chief constable Alan Pughsley was handed a £6,801 housing allowance and a £4,508 'compensatory grant', on top of his six-figure salary. It also claimed he took more than 50 days holiday last year.

It highlighted a host of top officers across the country who received significant extra payments.

The Taxpayers' Alliance, a grassroots campaign for lower taxes and more transparency with the public purse, said such payments were hard to justify. Its chief executive Jonathan Isaby said of the overall findings: "Housing allowances and huge salaries are a scandalous way to spend taxpayers' money when budgets are so tight and front line staff are being cut. Of course bosses are entitled to annual leave but receiving over 50 days holiday in one year is surely indefensible. This sort of largesse isn't found in the private sector and so there seems little justification for these additional perks at taxpayers' expense. They should be cut back to reflect the current need to make urgent savings."

SPOTLIGHT: Alan Pughsley

But Kent Police hit back. A spokesman said: "The chief constable's salary, allowances and annual leave entitlement is in line with national guidance and are independently set.

"The terms and conditions of his salary are in line with pay scales set out under the Police Regulations 2003, which are set by the Home Office. He is employed at an appropriate and competitive salary to meet the demands and challenges of policing in Kent. The salary of £198,723 includes a housing allowance of £6,801, and a compensatory grant of £4,508.

"Mr Pughsley provides his own car for 24/7 policing duties, whereas previous chief constables were provided with a car.

"He is entitled to 48 days a-year annual leave. The additional days taken are as a result of carrying over annual leave from the previous year."

WED: The happy couple

Gregg's recipe for love leads up aisle again

MASTERCHEF star Gregg Wallace has spoken of his happiness after tying the knot for the fourth time.

The 51-year-old cookery judge, who lives in Whitstable. wed Anne-Marie Sterpini, 30, in an intimate ceremony at Hever Castle.

He gushed on Twitter "Io sono molto contento!", translating as "I am very happy", following the nuptials.

Masterchef co-host John Torode served as best man, while Torode's girlfriend, actress Lisa Faulkner, was also at the event, as well as Masterchef: The Professionals' judge Monica Galetti, according to reports.

Wallace separated from his third wife, Heidi - a young teacher who had contacted him on Twitter to ask him a question about celery - in 2012 after 18 months.

He had been married twice previously and admitting cheating on his second wife, Denise - the mother of his two children - with other women.

He met Ms Sterpini on Twitter in March 2013, when she tweeted him a question about rhubarb.

Ms Sterpini has previously said the couple's 21-year age gap is "irrelevant", telling Hello! magazine: "I don't see Gregg as being older. I don't even think about it."

Heart attack forces Meldrew cancellation

ACTOR Richard Wilson, best known for TV's grumpy Victor Meldrew, has cancelled a Kent tour date after suffering from a heart attack.

Mr Wilson, 80, suffered a cardiac arrest on Wednesday afternoon and on Friday remained in a stable condition in hospital.

He had been due to revive his character from One Foot In The Grave for a one-man tour of theatres this autumn.

I Don't Believe It - which would have seen him perform one of the show's most famous episodes - had been due to call in at Dartford's Orchard Theatre on November 28.

That show, along with a 12-night run at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival starting next week, has now been scrapped.

The thorny character of Victor Meldrew was played by Mr Wilson between 1990 and 2000, and won him a host of awards as well as ever since being associated with the catchphrase 'I don't believe it!'.

Travellers leave site after legal stand-off

A CLEAR up operation began on Friday after a group of Irish travellers who set up camp in a council-owned park finally left after local authorities ramped up their legal threats.

The travellers, who arrived at Woodlands Park in Gravesend on August 5, had been served with a summons on Tuesday and then a court order on Thursday to leave the site.

It had been feared bailiffs would have to move them off the site but the camp packed up and left on Friday morning. One neighbour, Nick Redman, told KoS: ''There hasn't been any trouble, but they can't just turn up here and set up camp in the middle of a field we all pay our rates for.''

A spokesman for Gravesham Borough Council said: ''The travellers left before the court order's deadline passed. Council offers have checked the area for damage and clear up any rubbish left behind. Vehicle access to the park will be secured.''

The travellers would not comment when approached by KoS.

Jail for supermarket boss who stole £80k

A SUPERMARKET manager from Ramsgate who stole £80,000 through bogus refunds has been jailed for 16 months.

Neal Parton, 47, from Arklow Square, Ramsgate, started his deceit as deputy general manager of the Morrisons store on Sheppey and continued as general manager of the Larkfield store.

Between August 2014 and November 2015, Parton issued a total of 188 refunds to various bank accounts in his name totalling £80,937.51.

An internal audit by Morrisons highlighted the high number of refunds and their value, and the supermarket chain notified police, who arrested Parton on November 18, 2015.

He appeared recently at Maidstone Crown Court to be sentenced having pleaded guilty at an earlier hearing. Investigating officer detective constable Lynda Birch said: ''Parton thought no one would notice what he was doing and that he would get away with stealing little and often from his employers. But little and often resulted in a significant amount of money.''

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PM's grammar expansion hint wins county council support

By Chris Murphy
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

KENT County Council has thrown its support behind a hint from prime minister Theresa May that she will lift the ban on the creation of new grammar schools.

The county is one of the few in the country which still operates a selective system and recently got a significant breakthrough when an annexe of a girls' grammar in Tonbridge was given the nod to open in Sevenoaks.

But hopes of fresh standalone academy grammars seemed unthinkable after Tony Blair's Labour administration prevented the building of new ones in 1998.

Last weekend, the PM hinted she will scrap that ban, with her comments coming soon after education secretary Justine Greening said she was 'open-minded' about expansion discussions.

This week, Roger Gough, KCC cabinet member for education, said: "We support expansion of grammar capacity, as we do that of any good or outstanding school, where there is a clear need for more places. The 1998 Act prevents this being done through the establishment of new grammar schools. We believe that this is an unnecessary and damaging restriction and that this part of the legislation should be scrapped."

HQ: County Hall - home of Kent County Council in Maidstone

A major concern is that building new grammars in under pressure west Kent would not necessarily allow more local students to attend, but simply create more of a stampede from those in the nearby London boroughs and neighbouring counties.

Mary Bousted, the general secretary of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, said: "A government that is serious about social mobility would not allow the expansion of selective schools.

"All children deserve to have a first-class education, not just those whose parents can afford the private tuition to help them pass the 11-plus."

Unsurprisingly, there is widespread support among Kent's Conservative MPs for more grammars.

Dartford's Gareth Johnson said: "We need new schools in Dartford to match the increase in population. Grammar schools play an important role in the success of our borough's schooling system."

Minister underlines garden city promise

MORE than 9,000 people have registered an interest in the first 180 homes being built as part of the Ebbsfleet Garden City site.

The figures were revealed as new government minister for housing, Gavin Barwell, visited the site this week, to see some of the developments currently under way.

He confirmed the government's committment to delivering the 15,000 homes planned.

Algae forces popular lake to shut again

THE main lake at Conningbrook Lakes Country Park in Ashford has been forced to close again after the return of the blue-gree algae which forced its closure earlier this year.

The public have been advised not to go into the water and to keep dogs on leads for fear they could become ill.

Migrants hid in lorry

IMMIGRATION officials have taken in 10 suspected migrants who were found inside a lorry on the M25 on Thursday.

Six adults and four children were found inside the vehicle parked on the hard shoulder of the road between junctions two and three - Swanley and Darenth - during the rush hour. The Home Office is now dealing with the individuals.

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Drama as fishermen's boat starts to sink in the Swale

TEN fishermen have been saved after their boat started sinking in the River Swale last Sunday.

And it meant a swift return to action for lifeboat crews which were attending the annual Whitstable Regatta when the drama unfolded.

Margate's all-weather lifeboat and Whitstable's inshore lifeboat received the call from a charter angling boat reporting they were taking in water and in danger of sinking.

The fishermen were rescued and put on dry land at Harty, on Sheppey, by the Whitstable team.

Using specialist pumping equipment, the Margate crew then rescued the boat from sinking and towed it to the entrance of Faversham Creek.

Paul Hodson, lifeboat operation manager at Margate Lifeboat, said: "This joint operation demonstrates the importance of having a balanced mix of various lifeboats covering the north Kent coast.

"Without the rapid response of Whitstable's inshore lifeboat and the additional capabilities of Margate's larger all-weather lifeboat the outcome to this story could have been very different."

OAP who threatened to blow up a bank is guilty

A 73-year-old man from West Kingsdown who threatened to blow up a bank and caused a town centre to be sealed off for hours has been found guilty in court.

Reginald Esqulant of Fawkham Road, Sevenoaks, walked into the High Street branch of Santander around lunchtime on February 8. He then passed a note to staff demanding cash.

It warned failure to hand over any money would result in the use of an explosive device, which had been placed in the centre of the building. The pensioner then left the bank, expecting to pick up his loot from a point around the corner.

Large parts of the town centre were closed after police were called and a controlled explosion was carried out on the suspect package.

Police traced Esqulant the following day by tracking a VW Golf he had used.

Esqulant pleaded not guilty to blackmail, taking a motor vehicle without consent and driving while disqualified. A jury found him guilty of all three offences. He will be sentenced in November.

Det sgt Jon Faulkner said: " The construction of a hoax device showed Esqulant had planned to cause maximum fear in order to try and steal a large amount of money. Esqulant's actions not only caused extreme distress and fear to staff at the bank, but they also brought the centre of Sevenoaks to a standstill, leading to widespread disruption."

Medical site's £1.5m road

WORK has started on a new £1.5 million access road for the Kent Medical Campus in Maidstone.

The road will link Newnham Court Way to the far side of the 30-acre site which will eventually create more than 4,000 jobs, close to junction seven of the M20.

Uni takes top marks

FINAL year students emerging from the University of Kent remain the most satisfied in the UK, according to the latest National Student Survey.

It puts Kent in fourth place overall in the UK and joint first with Oxford and Surrey in London and the south east.

GP surgery take over

NHS chiefs say they are hoping the Church Lane Surgery in New Romney will remain open after the GP who runs the practice retires at the end of the month.

The practice will be run by provider Invicta Health with a view to improving the availability of appointments.

Knockout Ninja for you?

HUNDREDS are set to sign up to take part in Knockout Ninja - a challenging assault course in Sittingbourne where competitors raise funds for children's hospice Demelza.

It takes place at Central park on September 16-17. See demelza.org.uk for details on how to sign up.

Top Three Stories

1. Wilson's date cancelled

Heart attack stops comedian's Kent show

2. 'Whale' call for RNLI

Lifeboats rush to save inflatable whale

3. Pier body identified

Man's body found under Chatham pier

The Essential Guide:

...to Operation Stack

Everything you need to know about the M20 traffic procedure

FANS: The weather was kind as thousands flocked to see a host of musical legends take to the stage at the New Day Festival in Faversham last weekend. Not only did we run an online gallery this week, but you can see more inside this weekend's paper - turn inside.

Missed last week's...?

...YOU can read the paper online via our e-Edition at **www.kentnews.co.uk**

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Top Three Blogs

1. #SaveTwitter hits home

Twitter needs a major revamp, or else...

2. A game of chance

Tales of betting's ups and downs

3. Why Corbyn must go

Labour needs new leader to find success

Results of the *KoS* Online Poll

Are you playing Pokémon Go?

1. Of course, gotta catch 'em all! - 31%
2. I had a go, but it wasn't for me - 8%
3. No way - 46%
4. Poké-what? - 15%

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PINCHED: Farms in Swale and Yalding have seen large scale thefts of their harvest

Is gang behind fruit crop theft?

Thousands of pounds worth of strawberries and cherries have been stolen from county's farms

By Chris Murphy
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

THE Garden of England's famous crop of soft fruits are being targeted by crooks, after a spate of thefts from across the county left farmers counting the cost of thousands of pounds worth of losses.

Growers called in police after strawberries and cherries were stolen from various farms in Swale.

There were three reported thefts near Church Road, Tonge. The crimes are believed to have taken place between July 18-26 and saw some £1,600 worth of fruit pinched.

More crimes were reporteds from land near Head Hill Road, Faversham, between July 7-22 where crooks made off with £2,400 of soft fruit.

Police are investigating whether a fruit theft reported near Kenward Road, Yalding, is also connected. Between July 26-27 producers saw £2,000 worth of their fruit crop disappear.

High on the list of concerns is whether all the raids were carried out in a co-ordinated fashion by the same thieves, who are believed to be selling their hauls on to possibly unsuspecting market traders.

Officers investigating the reported thefts say the crimes are unusal and hoping it is not the start of a trend, while also advising farmers to ensure they secure their property sufficiently.

Officers from the rural crime unit are now appealing for help in finding thieves and for those living in rural communities to report anything suspicious.

Investigating officer, PC Marc Pennicott of the rural task force, said: "These thefts are all very similar so we believe they may be linked and I would encourage anyone with information to get in touch."

The rural task force was set up to bring together representatives from the gypsy liaison team and rural liason team into one co-ordinated unit.

It says, if safely possible, victims should note if a suspect is alone or part of a group; are they trespassing; do they have equipment, dogs or firearms with them; where they are heading; physical descriptions; any vehicles; and if possible, take pictures.

It comes amid increasing anxiety in the countryside over security concerns.

In Somerset, 240 sheep were rustled, and many farmers have seen machinery including quad bikes, pinched and sold on.

Even cyber criminals have attacked rural targets with one phone scam netting over £500,000 from one farmer.

Tim Price, NFU Mutual's rural crime specialist, said thieves are using Google Earth and available data to assess farm security before arrival.

He said: "Their tactics now include cloning tractor identities, advertising non-existent machinery in agricultural publications and stealing the GPS computer systems that are a key part of modern farming."

Those willing and able to protect themselves will always be in a better position, he said, adding: "Farmers are having to regularly update security measures at considerable cost to keep high-tech criminals at bay.

"They are using tracker devices on tractors, video and infra-red surveillance in their farmyards and even DNA markers to protect sheep from rustlers."

Rural crime as a whole appears to have stagnated in recent years, but remains worryingly high. According to NFU Mutual the cost of crime to the UK's rural economy reached £44.5m in 2013, which was an increase of 5.2 per cent on 2012 figures. In 2014, it was £37.8m and last year reached £42.5m.

The south east, however, saw reductions of nine per cent. The Farmers Weekly newspaper said: "People living and working in the countryside should regularly evaluate their security measures. Make improvements where necessary, remain vigilant and report any suspicious activity to the local police as well as community watch schemes."

Kent on Sunday contacted several growers around the county and found they were reluctant to go on the record about security, but one did say: "It is a particular concern."

Anyone who may have information about the recent Kent thefts can contact police on 01795 419119 quoting reference XY/27859/16,

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Wishlist to put county on route to prosperity

Kent County Council unveils details of projects it wants funding for to help county to keep growing and flourish

By Chris Britcher
chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

A MAJOR public consultation into future transport links for the county has got under way, which includes a £400 million scheme to get more Dover-bound traffic using the M2 and A2 to ease problems on the M20.

The local transport plan consultation runs until October 30 and includes a number of key initiatives.

Strategic priorities include: A2 Bean and A2 Ebbsfleet junction upgrades; an extention to Crossrail to take it into north Kent; a new Lower Thames Crossing; splitting Dover port traffic between the M20/A20 and M2/A2 routes as well as expansion of the port; journey time improvements in Thanet and a parkway rail station,;Ashford International Station signalling, and general rail and bus improvements.

KCC cabinet member for environment and transport, Matthew Balfour, said: "This consultation is an opportunity for people and organisations within Kent to let us know their views and whether they agree with our priorities.

"This is one of our biggest plans and will shape the way we invest in our infrastructure up until 2031. The transport plan is vital to boost Kent's economy and support a growing population which is expected to increase by 293,000 people in the next 15 years.

"With potential opportunities for devolution from government, now is the time for us to set out our plans and make clear what we want as a county.

"This plan will lay out what we will do to make sure transport is playing its part in making Kent a great place to live, work and do business."

KCC has a statutory duty to produce a local transport plan for the county of Kent. It identifies transport priorities for the county, as well as emphasising to national government and the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) the investment required to support growth.

The Dover scheme would see improvements to improve junction seven of the M2 at Brenley Corner to improve capacity and create free-flow between the A2 and M2.

In addtition, sections of single carriageway on the A2 north of Dover along the Jubilee Way to Whitfield will be dualled. Plus improvements at junction seven of the M20 to ease access between the A249 and the M20. The estimated cost of that is an eye-watering £393m.

There is also a push to support the redevelopment of Dover Western Docks to enhance the capacity for roll-on-roll-off ferry traffic given the limitations of the Eastern Docks. Government forecasts suggest a 101 per cent increase in RORO traffic by 2030.

Connected to that, is a demand to help ease overnight parking of lorries to prevent HGVs blocking lay-bys, industrial areas and residential zones. It proposes a network of commercially-operated parks across Kent.

For the Thames Gateway area - which covers Dartford, Gravesham and Swale - KCC wants upgrades to the A2 Bean and A2 Ebbsfleet juntions. In addition, it want an increase in the number of high speed rail services to Ebbsfleet to service the expected boom in future passenger numbers, and an extension of the Crossrail service taking it from Abbey Wood to Dartford, Ebbsfleet and Gravesend to further enhance London transport links.

Ashford's future as an international station may be in doubt unless vital £10.5m improvements are made to signalling on what are known as the Ashford Spurs. These must be upgraded to allow for the operation of the new Eurostar trains. Network Rail will conduct the work, with KCC working with Ashford Borough Council to fund and deliver the improvements.

Another major rail project is the long discussed Thanet Parkway station. Once earmarked to allow Manston Airport to grow, it is now being touted as rail relief for those on what is now dubbed Stone Hill Park - previously the airport - and within the Discovery Park enterprise zone.

KCC's long wished for an extra station would reduce journey time from Thanet Parkway to St Pancras by 20 minutes over the existing route from nearby Deal.

Concludes KCC's Matthew Balfour: "With potential opportunities for devolution from government, now is the time for us to set out our plans and our asks. This plan articulates what we will do to make sure transport is playing its part in making Kent a great place to live, work and do business."

See the consultation section of the KCC website for details and how to take part.

■**What do you think? Share your views and join the debate. Email editorial@kosmedia.co.uk or write to The Editor, KoS, Kent House, 81 Station Road, Ashford TN23 1PP.**

TRANSPORT ISSUES:

National transport issues:
Enabling Growth in the Thames Gateway
- New Lower Thames Crossing
- Port expansion
- A solution to Operation Stack

County transport issues:
- Bifurcation of port traffic
- Provision for overnight lorry parking
- Ashford International Station signalling
- Journey time improvements and Thanet Parkway railway station
- Rail and bus improvements

DOVER: Key element is for the M2 and A2 to take more of the strain of port-bound traffic

OPERATION STACK LORRY PARK CONSULTATION BEGINS

A CONSULTATION into the controversial plans to build a major lorry park to help ease the problems caused by Operation Stack got under way on Friday.

Running to September 23, it focuses on the proposal to build a park at Stanford West, close to junction 11 of the M20.

The government confirmed it was the preferred choice earlier in the summer.

Costing something in the region of £250million, it will house 3,600 lorries, and is in response to the chaos caused last summer when Operation Stack was in place for 32 days.

Stack sees parts of the M20 turned into a giant lorry park when there is a problem at the port or Eurotunnel terminals.

As freight is held on the motorway, all other traffic is diverted onto the county's A-roads which delivers a significant knock on impact.

Highways England insists it will work closely with residents and businesses to minimise the site's impact on the surrounding area - but local opposition has been vocal.

Highways England project director Adrian Sheppard said: "This is a solution to the problems caused by Operation Stack that has been talked about for decades, but on which we have made a great deal of progress in less than a year.

"Following our consultation earlier this year we have been working hard to refine our plans and are now keen to hear what people think about these. I encourage anyone who would like to understand more or ask questions to visit us at one of the public exhibitions we are holding."

After receiving strong support during the previous consultation, Highways England is exploring whether to use the site to provide overnight lorry parking to stop lorries parking on roads not intended for their use.

Construction work is due to start as soon as possible with spaces available from summer 2017.

Details can be found on the consultation section of the www.gov.uk website.

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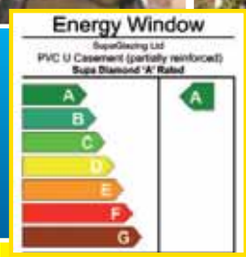

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Young offender detention site is slammed in latest report

It has come under fire ever since a Panorama investigation uncovered serious concerns about how youngsters in its care were being handled. Now a report carried out before it changed hands highlights a catalogue of major problems

By Chris Britcher
chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

AN INSPECTION report into the controversial Medway Secure Training Centre in Rochester has revealed a string of "serious and widspread failings", among them children having access to pornography and high levels of violence.

In a joint report issued by Ofsted, HM Inspectorate of Prison and the Care Quality Commission, it branded the youth prison 'inadequate'.

The centre hit the headlines earlier this year after a BBC Panorama report revealed allegations of child abuse following an undercover report.

The fall-out saw G4S, which ran the site, pulling out and the National Offender Management Service, part of the Ministry of Justice. taking over at the start of July.

Inspectors visited in June, before the takeover, and revealed a number of significant concerns.

The report said: "Levels of violence in the centre are very high and growing. This includes violence between young people and violence towards staff, despite a small and stable population of young people. The centre's senior managers are not aware of the increasing trends in many areas of the centre's functioning, and this is a stark example of their lack of oversight and governance.

"There is no violence reduction strategy to address this."

It added: "Security arrangements are a significant concern. Recent security breaches due to ineffective centre procedures have taken place impacting on the care and safety of young people. These include a games console being brought into the centre by a staff member for a young person where procedures were breached leading to serious misuse.

"Current arrangements for staff purchasing items on behalf of young people are unnecessarily convoluted and lack management oversight. This means current arrangements do not detect potential corruption, bribery or other forms of manipulation.

"In recent weeks, two USB data sticks containing highly inappropriate material have been found in areas accessed by young people. It is clear that young people have been able to access pornography although it is not clear how many young people have been involved."

In another case insufficiently secure storage of a broken pool cue and inadequate searching resulted in a young person being able to remove the item from a sterile area undetected, taking it from the living unit to the gym, and attempting to assault another young person with it, according to the report.

As well as overall effectiveness, Medway was given an inadequate rating for four categories - the safety of young people, promoting positive behaviour, the care of young people and the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

There were 'good' ratings for the resettlement and health of young people, while the achievement of young people was found to require improvement.

Some services within the centre have managed to continue to provide good quality interventions, the report said.

In February, G4S said it was selling its UK children's services business, which includes 13 children's homes and two secure training centres - Medway and Oakhill in Milton Keynes.

Jerry Petherick, managing director for G4S custodial and detention services, said it was a "deeply disappointing" report following a number of years in which Ofsted rated Medway as good or outstanding.

He said staff turnover was a real problem, adding: "This was clearly a period of intense disruption which created uncertainty and instability for the young people and staff at the centre and it proved extremely challenging to maintain appropriate staffing levels and standards."

Lessons learned at Medway will be applied through a far-reaching review of standards, skills and processes at Oakhill, Mr Petherick said.

He added: "I fully expect this to translate into substantial changes to the way in which the centre is run."

Lord McNally, chairman of the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales, described Ofsted's findings as "completely unacceptable".

Andrew Neilson, director of campaigns at the Howard League for Penal Reform, said: "This damning report underscores why it is welcome G4S are no longer running Medway secure training centre.

"Children in Medway are not safe and, given the allegations that were made in the Panorama documentary in January, it is shocking to see that violence is underreported and medical treatment is being inadequately recorded.

FOCUS: Medway Secure Training Centre is supposed to help put young offenders back on the straight and narrow. Justice minister Lizz Truss, right

This cannot go on.

"It is not simply the secure training centres which have proved failed models of child custody. In both young offender institutions and secure training centres we see problems of violence and cultures far removed from the caring environments children need. Radical action is required."

The Howard League for Penal Reform is the oldest penal reform charity in the world and is a national charity working for "less crime, safer communities and fewer people in prison".

Inspectors also found evidence that violence against children and staff was underreported. Staff were unable to provide inspectors with accurate records of the number of children requiring medical treatment as a result of assaults or fights.

Use of force and restraint were increasing and the number of such incidents in the month before the inspection was higher than at any point in the previous 12 months.

Inspectors found that child protection matters were not managed effectively, meaning children were not sufficiently safeguarded. Justice secretary Liz Truss said: "The findings of this report are shocking and decisive action has already been taken.

"G4S have been removed from the running of Medway; since July 1 the centre has been under new leadership.

"The safety and rehabilitation of young offenders is extremely important. We will be responding to the review with our plans for reform shortly."

*** Twelve people have been arrested in connection with the police investigation into the Medway Secure Training Centre. Rebecca Harold, 24, of Maidstone, has been charged with common assault and will appear at Medway Magistrates' Court on August 23. Nine other individuals are on bail until next month, while two people have been released without charge.**

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Double whammy of rail strikes

If you normally use Southern services and were then planning a jaunt to France on Eurostar this weekend, you may be right out of luck as both services spent the week facing damaging strike action

By Alan Jones
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

RAIL travellers in Kent have found themselves at the centre of two separate spates of industrial action this week as both Southern trains and Eurostar staff staged walk-outs.

Commuters who use Southern's services - which include services west out of Tonbridge and from Ashford down to the south coast - found the majority of services cancelled this week.

The situation eased on Thursday when both the rail firm and the Rail, Maritime and Transport (RMT) union agreed to resume talks. They were continuing on Friday in a bid to avert further disruption.

It centres on changes to the role of conductors on its services. However, there have been growing levels of dissatisfaction among travellers who have complained about the poor level of service. Earlier this summer, the franchise was given the nod to cancel more than 340 services as a consequence of staff sickness and the on-off industrial action. It included a number of peak services between Ashford and Hastings been replaced by buses.

Conciliation service Acas saw talks resume on Thursday and they are likely to continue this weekend.

No sooner did that situation ease with the strike being temporarily lifted, the RMT was calling its rail workers on Eurostar out in industrial action too.

Staff walked out on Friday in a move which will roll across this weekend. It also plans another walk-out over the bank holiday weekend at the end of the month.

The dispute is over shift pattenrs and other work/life balance issues.

Eurostar trains run from London St Pancras, calling at the international stations in Ebbsfleet and Ashford.

However, Eurostar says the impact this weekend on its services will be minimal and all those with advanced bookings will travel.

Just eight trains will be cancelled - including four today and two tomorrow (Monday); less than four per cent of the scheduled services.

As we went to press, talks were being planned to try to resolve the row between the rail operator and the union.

A Eurostar spokesman said: "All passengers booked to travel this weekend will be able to.

"We have made some small changes to our timetable, with all passengers due to travel on affected trains notified in advance, to allow them to change their booking to another train on the same day."

PROTESTS: RMT officials were outside St Pancras on Friday as part of the dispute with Eurostar

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said on Friday: "Our Eurostar train manager members are solid, determined and united as they kick off the first phase of strike action in a fight for a decent work/life balance.

"All that we are asking for is that our members get a fair crack when it comes to anti-social hours and that agreements we signed up to in good faith are stuck to."

RMT assistant general secretary Mick Lynch added: "The work/life balance has become disproportionate with unsociable hours in the mornings and at weekends, with many staff members often having to get up at 2-3am.

"Eurostar has agreements with staff across all four depots, including two in France and one in Belgium, but those are not being honoured in the UK, meaning employees here are working under worse conditions than their colleagues abroad.

"Eurostar have recognised this but they are taking too long - almost 10 years - to come to the table with a fair solution."

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IMPORTANT: The hop crop was vital to the county's economy

How East End would hop down for holidays

Simon Allin looks back at a fascinating chapter in the county's history when droves of people would descend to help gather in the brewers' crop of hops

CROWDS: Coachloads of pickers would arrive ready for weeks of hard work on our farms

FARMER: Tony Redsell, right, one of our major hop farmers, reflects on how things used to be done

DRIVE through the Kent countryside on a summer's day and you may spot one of the county's most cherished buildings – the oast house.

These long structures with white cone spires are relics of a bygone era when they were used in the process of hop farming, which was once the county's biggest industry.

A large crop meant a large demand for labour, and every year, in September, families from London, Sussex and East Anglia would travel to Kent to work in the hop gardens, harvesting the flower that gives beer its bitter flavour.

With the industry playing such a big role in the county's economy, the annual influx of labour was vital for farmers and brewers.

And for many of the families who came from the East End of London, the trip to Kent was a welcome break from the crowded and dirty conditions of the metropolis.

Boughton hop farmer Tony Redsell, 83, owns three hop farms between Sittingbourne and Canterbury, and is one of the UK's leading growers.

He told Kent on Sunday: "I started out in 1948 when we were hand picking them and about 75 per cent of our labour was from West Ham and Plaistow.

"We could employ between 600 and 800 people over four to five weeks. Some of them would come for a fortnight; some would appear and disappear.

"We had huts and we gave them faggots – large bundles of sticks for the fire – and a bale of straw for their beds."

Every day the family's hops would be put into a bin, which a measurer would empty using a basket known as a bushel. The tallyman would record how many bushels each family had picked.

"I remember the first year that a family earned more than £100, which was considered to be quite a lot," Mr Redsell said.

"The numbers of people coming started to drop off gradually as prosperity started to improve and we drifted into machine picking, but we did keep some going.

"They went to the local pub on Saturdays, and the pub would make sure there was no carpet on the floor and get out the larger glasses that were harder to break.

"They would go to the local shops to get meat. There used to be seven grocers and four butchers in Boughton at the time."

Stuart Tricker, senior brewer at Shepherd Neame in Faversham, said the tradition of hopping was 'vital' to the brewing industry in Kent.

"Back then until the 1960s it was totally manual, and what they were looking for in those days was a ready source of labour," he explained.

"It was incredibly labour-intensive. The source of labour from the East End helped the farmers.

"It enabled them to have a holiday, so the hop growers tended to have accommodation - it was like a community activity.

"They could get out of London, stay in free accommodation and it was mum and the kids. They lived in garden sheds.

"On some hop farms they used to arrange for the doctor to come out to provide medical care, so it was quite caring - but they were made to work quite hard.

"It would have been much like going on a camping holiday, with entertainment round the fires."

Along with many other brewers, Shepherd Neame had its own hop farm, which employed labourers from the East End.

"They were paid by the number of hops they picked," Mr Tricker continued. "There was a saying, 'don't pay the tally man'.

"The tally man had sticks, almost like tent pegs, and registered how many they had picked.

"Back then it was vital. Kent used to have big hop farms to the big brewers. If you go back 20 or 30 years, we used to have an awful lot more brewers in Kent."

Continued on page 20

Continued from page 19

Once they had been picked, the hops had to be dried out – which is where the oast houses came in.

"When you take the hops out of the field, they are 80 per cent moisture," Mr Tricker said. "You would line them up on a grid frame in the oast house and light the fire underneath – otherwise they would just rot."

Judith Smith, 76, was one of the youngsters who made the annual pilgrimage down to Kent from her home in London.

Now retired, she lives in the almshouses in Faversham and volunteers at the Fleur de Lis Heritage Centre.

She told KoS: "We used to come down every year in a lorry and stay in a hut and pick hops. And because of that, I met my husband.

"It was like a holiday, where you could earn money for things like school uniforms. My dad used to come down on the weekend.

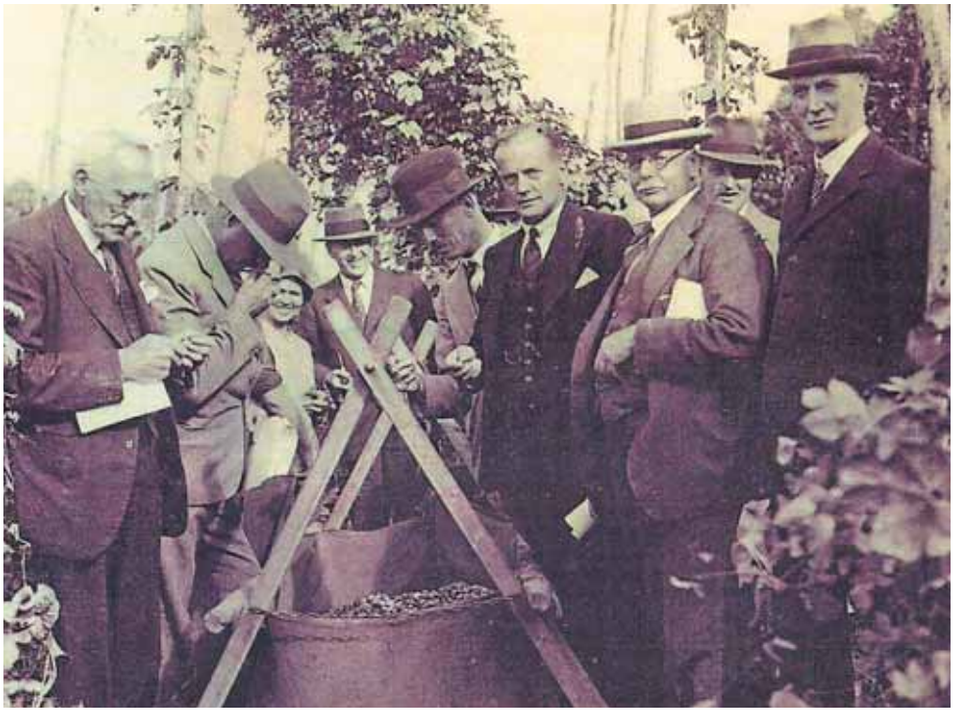
"It was a bit unhygienic – we used to sleep in one hut.

"We used to have Sunday concerts and children used to do their bit on stage. It gave us a holiday from south east London and the bombing. It was quite an adventure.

"I met my husband, David – he was born in Boughton – because of hop picking, and two of my cousins married local boys.

"Relations with the locals were mostly friendly. Some of the eastenders were on the rough side and they weren't very popular but most of us were well-behaved and made friends for life.

"It was good for London children. I wasn't too bad – I was from Blackheath – but some of the East End was awful.



MEASURED: Each crop would be carefully measured before the hops were taken to oast houses to dry

"Lots and lots of Londoners live down here now. I would not want to live in London now. I have quite a lot of friends moved down here, and my cousins.

"They cooked on an open fire; we had stew and all sorts. We had a normal diet.

"We only came down for four to six weeks, and as I got older I had to go to grammar school and wasn't allowed to go. Then they turned over to machines."

Joyce Dutton also used to come from the East End to pick hops - a tradition she continues to uphold.

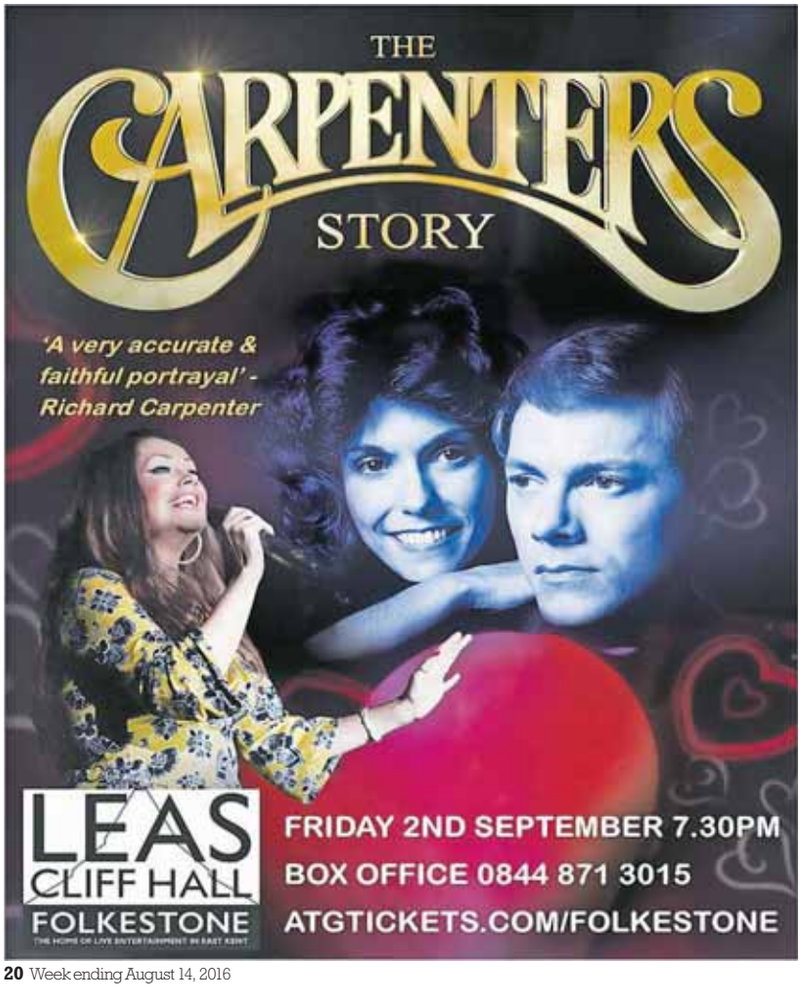
"I was seven months old the first time and I am now 78, so that is a long while," she said.

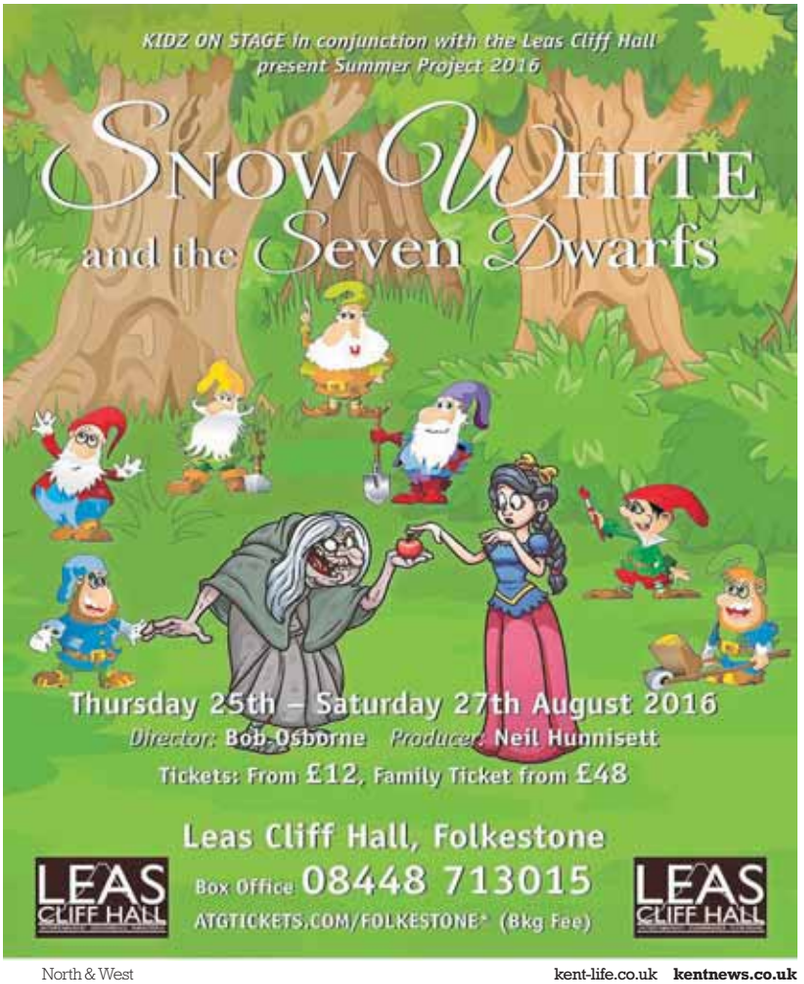
"The big attraction was to get out of smoky London. I hated picking hops. I lived right in the East End, in Kenning Town, near the docks and the gas works.

"When people were hopping the East End emptied out. I worked in a school and in the first three weeks of September, one child turned up - the rest were down the hop fields. By the third week, all the children were back."

Despite her youthful aversion to picking hops, Mrs Dutton, who now lives on Sheppey, still comes hopping and has passed on the custom to her family.

"We still come every year. My sons and my daughter work on the fields and last year my eldest grandson did it while he waited to go to university."





Star couple in BBC antique show

Traders at a popular Thanet vintage marketplace found themselves caught on camera this week as celebrities Vic Reeves and Nancy Sorrell called in as they filmed an episode of a popular TV series

HUSBAND and wife Vic Reeves and Nancy Sorrell were filming in the county on Monday for an upcoming show as part of the BBC's Celebrity Antiques Road Trip.

Comedian, artist and actor Mr Reeves - real name Jim Moir - married model Ms Sorrell in 2003 and the couple live with their children in Charing.

And this week they were out and about in the county filming for the popular BBC2 show which pits famous faces against one another.

Partnered with an antique expert, each of the stars took off to track down something valuable and sell them at auction. Profits raised then go to the Children in Need charity.

Among the destinations they visited was the Petticoat Lane Emporium in Dumpton, near Ramsgate.

Boasting 175 stalls, expert Charlie Ross and Vic Reeves arrived in a 3.9-litre Austin Healey convertible, followed an hour later by Nancy Sorrell and expert Thomas Plant in a gold Rolls Royce Silver Shadow.

Normally the teams visit different establishments, but, say emporium bosses, because it is so big, both teams visited at the same time. They were both followed around by a camera crew as they spent three hours on the site searching for the right items.

Trader Jane Lamb who shares a pitch on Petticoat Lane's Fleet Street with her husband Kevin and sold two items to the expert, said: "There was some great banter and haggling with Charlie Ross and we're really looking forward to watching the episode."

In total, each team snapped up three items. Chris Millbank, a trader with a pitch on Oxford Street within the emporium, sold an item to one of the celebrity team but revealed another item expert Charlie Ross had shown interest in had been sold to a member of the public whilst the expert went away to think about it.

Camera crews captured trader Caz Oliver and emporium boss Zak Tozer greeting and dealing with the celebrity guests.

Proprietor Richard Tozer said: "This is a very exciting development for us and all of the traders here. It will really help put the emporium and Ramsgate on the tourist map."

His business partner, Kevin Shaw, added: "This may well be the start of antique and vintage enthusiasts getting used to seeing the Petticoat Emporium on national TV.

"Both Charlie and Thomas told me that they are keen to bring other national shows including Bargain Hunt and Flog It here. This can be nothing but good for our business, Ramsgate town and Kent."

FILMING: Vic Reeves and Charlie Ross, left, Nancy Sorrell and Thomas Plant, centre, and outside the emporium

Vic Reeves shot to fame in the late 1980s with his Big Night Out show on Channel 4, alongside comedy partner Bob Mortimer.

By the mid 1990s, both had moved to Kent, first in Ashford, then Charing and Mr Mortimer to Tunbridge Wells.

Sun shines on dawn of the New Day era

Photographer **Andy Archer** captures the mood at Mount Ephraim, near Faversham, at last weekend's big show

ORGANISERS of last weekend's New Day Festival say they hope to be back in the county next year after last weekend's first event at Mount Ephraim in Hernhill, near Faversham.

With the exception of the toilets not being serviced as promised and a couple of back-stage glitches, organisers say the event went well, and have spent the week accounting to see how it performed financially; the key test for any such event.

The likes of Ian Anderson, from Jethro Tull, The Stranglers and Wilko Johnson rocked the venue in glorious sunshine over three days.

Organiser Dave Rees, 53, from Newcastle, told us: "Apart from the toilets where we were badly let down by the suppliers, things went really well, especially from the audience point of view.

"There were a couple of things back-stage that will also be tweaked for next year to ensure everything runs a little smoother. But the fans would not have been aware of those.

"It was a great event, and I think those that attended will want to come back again next year. We are looking at the August Bank Holiday next time.

"The weather also did us a great favour - it was glorious sun and warm evenings, that could not have been better."

The festival is the result of Mr Rees and some like-thinking music-loving friends wanting to serve others like them. He said: "We wanted to put on the types of show we wanted to go and see.

"We feel there will always be an audience for shows like ours."

POPULAR: Jethro Tull's Ian Anderson was the star attraction on the Saturday night at the New Day Festival which proved a big hit.
Words: Chris Murphy

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Anger boils over at PM's cash-to-frack 'bribe' plans

Theresa May's suggestion of paying households to allow fracking for gas beneath their homes has been fiercely criticised by many who are opposed to the highly controversial drilling method

By Chris Britcher
chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

A SOUTH east MEP has branded Theresa May's proposals to pay households payments of potentially thousands of pounds to allow fracking to go ahead in their area as "immoral and tantamount to bribery".

A £1 billion shale wealth fund unveiled by former chancellor George Osborne in November will set aside up to 10 per cent of the tax proceeds from fracking to benefit the communities hosting wells.

But now the prime minister is amending the scheme so the money can go direct to residents rather than being given to councils or community trusts to spend, as Mr Osborne planned.

It is expected the new fund could deliver as much as £10 million to each community where wells are sited. Downing Street declined to estimate how much payouts could be worth, but it is thought that individual households could receive between £5,000 and £20,000.

But Green MEP Keith Taylor blasted the proposals.

He said: "These proposals are immoral and tantamount to bribery. Catastrophic climate change doesn't take bribes.

"Of all the measures the new prime minister should be undertaking to tackle catastrophic climate change, it is astounding that Theresa May has rested on this wrong-headed policy – just days after climate experts warned that Britain, and the world, is on course to miss key climate targets."

Fracking is a hugely controversial method of gas extraction which involves firing high pressure air into rocks below the surface and forcing out the gas they release to harness for energy.

But it has been blamed for earthquakes and a host of other environment risks and is being fought hard by campaigners.

Adds Mr Taylor: "The scientific consensus on climate change has never been greater and we have been told that the best chance of limiting potentially catastrophic temperature increase is by leaving fossil fuels in the ground.

"The proposals also beg the question; what price clean water? I've visited homes in Pennsylvania where the water is too contaminated to drink because of fracking. That same danger is now being fast-tracked across Britain.

"Campaigners, communities, and some councils have already made their voices heard: they don't want fracking. In fact, a recent government poll revealed that just 21 per cent of people support fracking, while 76 per cent of people support renewable energy.

"The UK has enormous renewable energy potential – and we have seen evidence that people across the south east have the passion, willingness, and know-how to create clean, people-powered energy in spite of the government's continued onslaught.

"The British public will not be swayed by a naked attempt at using bribery to divide and conquer communities. It is time for the government to stop circumventing democracy and, finally, listen to the public."

Mrs May said: "The government I lead will be always be driven by the interests of the many - ordinary families for whom life is harder than many people in politics realise.

"As I said on my first night as prime minister: when we take the big calls, we'll think not of the powerful but of you.

"This announcement is an example of putting those principles into action. It's about making sure people personally benefit from economic decisions that are taken - not just councils - and putting them back in control over their lives.

"We'll be looking at applying this approach to other government programmes in the future too, as we press on with the work of building a country that works for everyone."

The Kent branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England was also opposed to the proposals.

A spokesman said: "We have serious reservations in respect to the implications of the proposed compensation offer to householders affected by shale gas development involving hydraulic fracturing (fracking).

"Such operations within Kent represent a material risk to rural communities insofar as there are few, if any areas in this county where fracking could be carried without there being a material risk of triggering earth movements and/or generating the release of hazardous fluids with the consequent threat to properties and the county's groundwater reserves which support more than 70 per cent of Kent's public supplies.

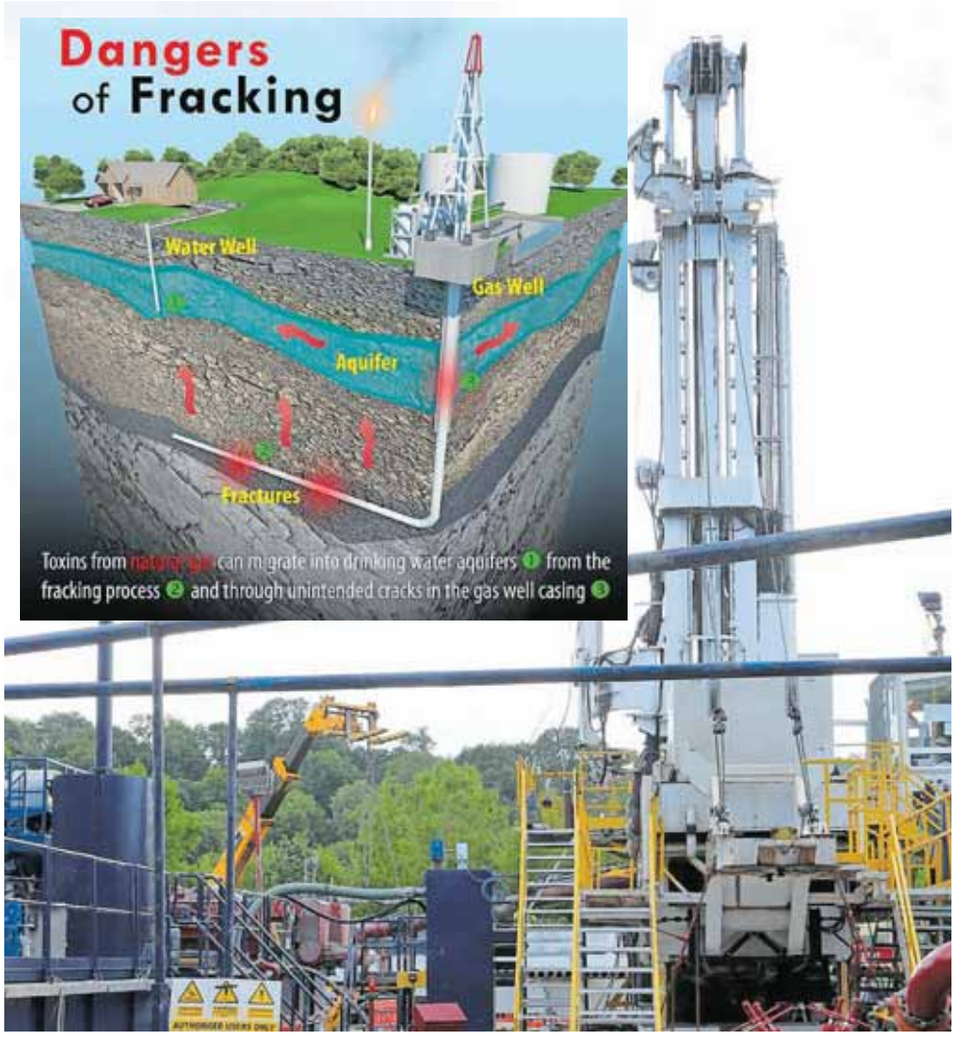
"The scale of such hazards could be well beyond the scope of the proposed compensation package and it is for this reason that we will continue to oppose shale gas development by fracking in Kent."

Greenpeace UK chief scientist Doug Parr added: "The government has tried to sweeten the fracking pill with cash payments before, and it didn't work.

"Over the last two years, public opposition has soared and support for shale has tanked. People's concerns about climate change and their local environment cannot be silenced with a wad of cash.

"You can't put a price on the quality of the air you breathe, the water you drink, and the beauty of our countryside."

What do you think? Would you be willing to park your concerns for a cash payment? Share your views and join the debate. Email editorial@kosmedia.co.uk or write to The Editor, KoS, Kent House, 81 Station Road, Ashford TN23 1PP.



PERILS: Fracking could solve our future energy problems, but also could cause significant environmental issues

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WELL travelled widow, 70 years young, GSOH, lively and outgoing, lots of interests including walks, bowls, socialising and the theatre, WLTM similar male. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 423029**

JANE, young 41, very broadminded seeks chap any age for discreet no strings fun, any age, no time wasters ACA. **Tel: No: 0906 515 3010 Box: 409715**

TAMARA, Indian woman, Muslim, 43, golden brown skin, long black straight hair, WLTM male in his 40s. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 423153**

KIM, 32yrs, attractive blonde lady seeks discreet gent for daytime distractions. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3006 Box 421657**

LISA, fun loving and free, WLTM passionate, broadminded male, any age, discreet honest, seaside location. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422877**

KERRY, 35yrs, married in open relationship, attractive, tall, slim and very presentable. Seeks discreet gent any age for casual pleasurable encounters. **Tel: 0906 515 3042 Box 422363**

KIM, 50, lovely kind, 5ft 6, brown eyes, dark curly hair, curvy figure seeks nice genuine guy for LTR, same age as me. **Text only Mailbox: 5512493**

KATIE 35yrs, slender well educated brunette seeks no strings mutual pleasure with gent 40+ Must be discreet, married or single. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3002 Box 419673**

SOPHIA young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. **Tel: 0906 515 3018 Box: 413399**

PAT, petite blonde lady, GSOH, young looking for her age, seeks genuine gent any age with GSOH. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422393**

LORRAINE, attractive solvent brunette, 34yrs, own house/car witm gent any age, looks unimportant but must have GSOH. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3030 Box 422415**

KAY, 66, slim blonde, 5'5, very active, loves travel, outdoor life and much more. Seeks white guy 60-69 in Reading area. **Text only Mailbox: 5312512**

EMILY, mature well educated lady, blonde and smart and broadminded seeks gent any age for no strings fun. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3022 Box 421375**

RITA, seeks a genuine male for friendship, days out, shes very friendly, genuine and social, give her a call ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422403**

FELICITY, well educated, sophisticated lady, 38yrs, unhappily married and looking for a distraction with a man 30+, must be discreet. **Text Only Box: 4023417**

MARIA 57, likes gym, outdoors, wildlife, seeking nice male for nights out, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417573**

BLACK professional female seeks professional/tall Lebanese or Egyptian or Indian (must be fair skinned man)... for marriage. **Text only Mailbox: 5373562**

GENUINE, GSH, attractive, outgoing professional female, 55. Enjoys keeping fit, socialising and travel, WLTM similar male for relationship. **Text only Mailbox: 5453851**

WIDOW would like to meet a gent 64-74yrs with a good sense of humour, I love dancing, cinema, theatre, pub lunches, all the normal things. There must be someone out there and I live in Surrey. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418727**

50YRS, old attractive lady. Sheila, caring honest, seeks discreet gent. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422469**

FEMALE, blue eyes, slim and pretty, from South Africa, young fifties, seeking a sincere, retired gentleman, who resides close to the sea. **Text only Mailbox: 5456242**

YOUNG at heart lady, 60s, genuine, seeks warm, down-to-earth gentleman, similar age, for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420773**

MERRY, widow, dark hair, kind and caring, hoping to meet a kind gent for friendship, possibly more. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422339**

LAURA, single mum, 29yrs, blue eyed blonde, fair skinned, pretty. Lonely and seeking adult company when the kids are in bed! ACA. **Text Only Box: 4161735**

BARBARA, is a caring lady who seeks a man to care for, she will do anything to make you happy. Just give her a call today. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422411**

EARLY 70s, young at heart widow, likes dancing, eating out and in, pub lunches, theater and cinema, keep fit, the sun, WLTM gent 65-75, with similar interests. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421761**

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SLIM blonde lady, very young 66, active, fun loving, many interests, seeks unattached white guy, 60-68, Reading area. **Text only to mailbox: 5312512**

FEMALE, young 58, 5ft2, size 14, blonde, bubbly, GSOH, warm, loving, kind and caring, loves music, animals, seaside, looking for that special someone. **Text only Mailbox: 4715158**

YOUNG 56 year old lady, gosh, 5ft5, larger lady, affectionate, likes eating out, films, music, socialising, looking for a relationship with a genuine, honest, loving, romantic man. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421363**

ORIENTAL lady, honest, caring, loves walking, WLTM a reliable, sincere man for LTR. **Text only Mailbox: 5443434**

SUSAN 44, blonde hair, well educated, professional, GSOH, likes music, travel, seeking male for fun and friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414069**

LORNA, Afro-Caribbean lady, retired nurse, late 60s, seeking similar aged gentleman, n/s, someone who is kind and honest, looking for friendship. Croydon area. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420183**

GEORGE you left Carole a message but I did not get your phone number, please call again. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 380942**

KAY, young 66, widow, slim, blonde, 5'5, GSOH. Very active, loves travel, outdoor life and loads more looking for white male. **Text only to mailbox no: 5312512**

DAISY 50, WLTM nice guy 45-59 for discreet friendship maybe more. Likes going for a drink, rock music and holidays. **Text only to Mailbox no: 5082641**

CAROLE 52, long chestnut hair, attractive, 5ft 4ins, medium build, likes travel, animals, countryside, seeks Scottish male, under 57 with hair. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 380448**

ELLEN, young retired, divorced, new to W Sussex, seeks friend for outings, dinners and similar. Must be 55-65 genuine, educated and fun. **Text only to Mailbox no: 5068020**

ANDREA pre-op transsexual, 56 years old, blonde hair blue eyes, likes cosy nights in, pubs meals out, long walks looking for a nice man. **Text only to Mailbox no: 5310019**

MARINA cuddly blonde, blue eyes, kind, caring, loyal, down to earth, lonely girl. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414627**

CHANTELLE, 5ft3 light brown/blonde hair, blue eyes, like nights in/out, walks, animals, romance seeks honest guy. Littlehampton. **Text only to Mailbox no: 4923883**

KAY 66 widow, slim, blonde 5'5. fun loving, loves travel, out door life and much more. Seeks similar man aged 59-69 for friendship, maybe more. **Text only to Mailbox no: 5312512**

Men Seeking

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.55 per minute plus your phone company's access charge. Texts cost £1.50 per message received.

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PENSIONER widower with car seeks sequence ballroom dancer who is good with naughty boys. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418113**

HARRY, 56, attractive guy, divorced, looking for an attractive female for meet ups and erotic, sensual, no strings fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 423159**

EASY going male 56, athletic build looking for a lady for fun times and leisure activities. Any age. I'm in Worthing. **Text only Mailbox: 5458706**

FUN loving, discreet man, looking for NSA friendship and fun with a very open minded lady. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 423191**

COUNTRY gent, 50, seeks open minded lady, for fun and friendship, possibly more, by impulsive romantic, dining out and in, and sexy fun too. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 423127**

TALL, fit, hunky guy, early 50s, Basingstoke, would like some female company, to enjoy hot summer days and cold winter evenings with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 423149**

WALLACE, 60, 5ft3, seeking a genuine petite lady, 57-67, likes holidays in Spain, looking for a LTR for love and much more. Surrey, no time wasters. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 423313**

BEN, kind caring gent, 37yrs, very tall and well built with curly black hair. Own home, good job, just missing a special lady. **Text Only Box: 4158248**

JOHN, Sussex gentleman, 6ft, very tactile, seeks lady, 30-60, for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422903**

OLD pensioner/widower, with car, seeks female for adult fun and role-play, I also dance, sing and swim. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421139**

MATURE male, married, looking for adult daytime fun with a lady, any status/age/nationality, give me a call letls have some fun! **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 423077**

CLIFF young 50s, working nights, has plenty free time in day, looking to meet lady for fun, maybe more. Age 30-55. **Text only Mailbox: 5495780**

BEN, 48, musician, nice looking, fit, 5ft10, intelligent, caring, charming, clean-cut image, seeks lady any age/looks who requires daytime, discreet, very passionate fun meetings. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421399**

PAUL 51 genuine WLTM female 25-45 for friendship and fun, maybe more. **Text only Mailbox: 5447746**

WIDOWER with car, seeks female ballroom/sequence dancer. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418377**

HOVE pensioner, widower, with a car, seeks dominant female for adult, naughty fun, age and looks not important. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419479**

MARK, 50, handsome, great physique, 5ft10, seeking a lady, 50-75, for morning or afternoon fun, chats and fantastic passion. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422945**

RYAN 50yrs, 5ft 9ins, medium build, considered attractive, N/S, lives London, loves Eastbourne, looking for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 404739**

SLIM Jamaican male, 68, n/s, likes walking, theatre, cinema and holidays, seeks slim to medium build West Indian lady, 65-68, n/s, for relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422629**

WELL travelled, tall, fit widower in his 70's living in mid Sussex, seeks a lively widow for outings, stimulating conversation. **Text only Mailbox: 5473939**

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PASSIONATE male missing female companionship, would you like to join me in discreet fun and adult humour? **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 406611**

PAUL 51, likes meals out, music, weekends away, seeking female to share fun times with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413479**

ALAN, 56, single, from Brighton, looking for a lady, 50-59, whols nice and easy to get along with, and would be interested in going out for a drink and a meal and a chat then give me a call! **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421955**

MALE, 42, fit, active, stocky, seeks larger lady, 40-50ish, for NSA fun, Sussex area. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422481**

PAUL 46, 5ft 8ins, 14st, hazel eyes, brown hair, likes meals out, cinema, holidays, seeks Miss Right/soul mate, friend and lover, 30-55. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 379206**

MATURE male seeks female, any age/status not important for casual fun. Nice flat, nice car. Witney. **Text only Mailbox: 5467178**

48YR old male, seeks female, 30-60 who enjoys the good things, meals out, cinema, theatre, music, holidays, weekends away etc. East Sussex. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 386756**

JACK,55, good looking, fit and in shape WLTM broadminded lady, any age for social and relaxation interludes. **Text only Mailbox: 5458706**

PAUL, 53, business man, genuine, likes eating out, films, music, holidays and having fun, WLTM a similar loving, caring female, age and looks unimportant, for relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422521**

MALE 48, own business, average looks, medium build and looking for love. Must like the good things in life, 30-55yrs. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 390746**

76YR old widower, ex military/air lines, likes boating, motor cycling, seeks Tinkerbelle to make me laugh again. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409201**

MALE, 47, tall, dark hair, blue eyes, separated, have grown up teenagers, lives alone, works full time, looking for that special someone that will lead to a LTR and hopefully more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421943**

MALE, 47, tall, dark hair, blue eyes, looking for female, 39-51, with very GSOH, loyal, honest, caring, single mum welcome, for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422315**

THOMAS athletic, easygoing, likes sports, meals out, cinema, nights out, seeks female, 40-55. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 388192**

OUTGOING friendly guy seeks similar female to share good times with. **Text only Mailbox: 4915263**

HOWARD, works full time as a psychic, lives in Hastings, looking for a likeminded female. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422255**

JACK 55, slim, athletic, clean, intelligent, WLTM female 35 to 55 for relaxing and stress free interludes WORTHING area text only. **Text only Mailbox: 5458706**

HELLO I'm Tom, 33, decent looking, fit, into the gym and running, loves animals, get in touch and leave me a message! **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422065**

49YR old male, interesting, exciting, outgoing, seeking similar aged female. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417825**

LADY, 70+ sought by caring and affectionate 70 year old male, for long term, intimate relationship, initially daytimes only, larger lady very welcome. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421995**

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BI male, seeking to meet pre op TS or TV, for no stings attached, local fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422647**

BI guy WLTM similar bi or gay guy, 18-30. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421283**

ALERIE cuddly blonde, late 50's, 5ft 1ins, seeks bi lady of similar age for friendship and fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410203**

60S bi male, WLTM similar guys for fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 423273**

MALE, 68yrs, 5ft 4ins looking for genuine gay male, similar height and size. **Text only Mailbox: 4859409**

MATURE bi male seeks similar for fun and friendship. **Text only Mailbox: 4641909**

Friends

SARAH 35, bi, seeking that special someone, male/female, 30-45. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413123**

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50 NOT OUT

Inspiring those over 50 to live life to the full with an active mind and body

How to look good and feel fabulous

There are more ways than ever to keep fit whatever your age and whatever your condition

HITTING the big 5-0 no longer seen as reaching the end of your youthful years. In fact, today, there are people comfortably in their eighties running marathons and making valuable contributions to their local communities.

But ensuring you make the most out of the years leading up to and during retirement still need you to be proactive. And at the heart of every study is a need to keep an active mind and body.

Inside, we don't intend to preach or convince; simply to suggest some positive steps which could make all the difference to your happiness levels. And if you're 50-plus then rest assured you're in good company. This year saw actress Helena Bonham-Carter, left, reach the half century mark. The latest member of an awe-inspiring club.

Get creative and keep an active mind

Check out our hobby list

As Featured on BBC's "Antique Road Trip Celebrity Version"

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Are hobbies key to success?

KEEPING the mind and body active is universally acknowledged as the key to a long and healthy life.

And although getting older brings with it plenty of challenges, so too opportunities to develop new skills you've always wanted to have or to revive.

What's more, by following up on your creative urges and taking up a hobby, the chances are it will mean you're up and moving and interacting with more people too.

Not sure what would be the perfect option for you? ***Emily King*** looks at 10 hobbies that could put life into your days and days onto your life.

1. ART

WHETHER you're a beginner or a pro, art classes allow you to discover and nurture your creative flare, and they come in a variety of forms.

The Kent Adult Education Centre in Tunbridge Wells offers all classes from sketching to watercolour painting, and prices start from £1 for taster sessions, and £5 per session following. Alternatively, if you're looking for a unique painting experience, you can try pottery painting at This Art of Mine in Maidstone. Prices range rom £12 to £50 depending on the pottery you are painting. Who knows, maybe you'll be a dab-hand at painting?

2. BAKING

They say that baking can be theraputic, as long as you set a timer.

Dubbed "Kent's largest cake school" is the Annabelle Jane Cake School in Maidstone. It offers not only a two week 'back to basics' course (£79.99), but for the confectioners among us there are introductions to animal modelling, sugar flower techniques, and even a wedding cake course. Or perhaps you just want to use baking as a means to spend some quality time with your granchildren; for this there's a cupcake making course aimed at adult and child pairs. Let your inner baker out.

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EXERCISE REFERRAL AT ACTIVE LIFE

Exercise Referral is available for anyone referred by their GP or Health Professional. There are a range of Active and Aqua 4 Life activities available both within the Gentle Gym and the Active Life Centres.

A screening assessment is required before any Active 4 Life or Aqua 4 Life class.
Please call 01227 264444 for more information on the Exercise Referral scheme and to see if you are eligible.

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3. GARDENING

When you hit 50 your appreciation for the natural world intensifies and with retirement, the opportunity to sculpt that which surrounds you.

So gardening could be just for you.

If you want to partake in some social gardening, a club like the Strood Gardening Club is beneficial as they now have over 80 members and meet regularly. The vegetable and fruit gardening made easy course at the Adult Education Centre is for people who have always loved the idea of growing their own fruit and vegetables but haven't the slightest clue where to start. I mean, who needs supermarkets when you can grow your own fruit and veg?

4. COOKING

The way to many people's heart is through their stomach, so why not take up cooking or improve upon the skills you already have?

The Kent Cookery School in Ashford offers cooking courses in everything from bread making, and barbequing to Indian, Asian, and street food cuisines. There are courses to suit any and all of your cooking desires with prices starting from around £65. Or if you're based near Tunbridge Wells there's the Rosemary Shrager Cookery School aimed at all abilities, prices start from around £75.

5. LANGUAGES

Maybe you learnt a language in your youth and want to brush up, or you're going on holiday, or you just want to feel more cultured; language courses are available here, there, and everywhere.

Hablemos Spanish Language School in Canterbury runs Spanish lessons for basic to upper intermediate level at £7.50 per hour for 14 weeks, and encourages attendees to learn speaking, listening and writing in the language.

If you want to try a language completely new to English, you could learn Mandarin at the Tonbridge Adult Education Centre. Apparently the course covers "brief outlines on cuisine, weather or traditions according to the needs of the group".

6. COMPUTING

Want to keep up with the technology savvy younger generations?

Age UK in Sevenoaks and Tonbridge run computer training courses aimed at helping you keep in contact with your children and grandchildren because, let's be honest, technology is going to be the easiest form of contact you have with them nowadays. And on the plus side it means when they tell you to "google it" you definitely can. Skills Plus Centres throughout the Kent area also offer basic IT skills depending of the needs of the students.

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7. WINE CLUBS

An unconventional hobby possibly, but that does not make it any less a hobby.

Kent Wine Academy based in Ashford but with another venue in Tenterden, holds three courses: Fundamentals of wine, introduction to wine, and the world of wine, and all courses are for wine enthusiasts who wish to know more about how wine is made, where exactly it comes from, and what to pair certain wines with. Of course it might be feasible to say that the real bonus here is that you get to taste the wines as you go along,

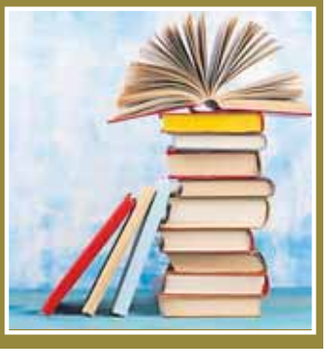
8. DANCING

Like walking, there are many health benefits to dancing, only it's a lot more fun.

With Strictly judge Len Goodman originating from Dartford is it any wonder he opened a dance school there? The Goodman Dance Academy offers ballroom, Latin, freestyle, street and hip hop dance classes for all ages, as well as fitstep classes for those who want to use dance as their daily workout. Prices start at £5 and the school offers classes from beginner to intermediate,

Lessons could help you turn a hobby into a perfection.

9. BOOK CLUBS



Reading keeps your brain ticking, keeps you entertained, and allows you some "me" time. But why not, once a week, meet with friends to discuss your thoughts on the book you're reading? It turns the unsocial activity of reading into a topic of conversation and a means to meet up with companions.

Kent County Council have a reading group directory, for anyboby looking to join a group, which lists more than 10 groups in the area. One particular group that is welcoming everyone is Ash Library Reading Group near Canterbury. This group is free to join, and meet on Monday evenings.

10. WALKING

Whether it's in a bid to keep fit, clear your head, or socialise, walking is one of the most common and beneficial past-times.

The Kent Ramblers are a walking group in Kent with 15 different groups in every part of Kent with the exception of Swale. Their walks vary depending on age and fitness levels but they do have something for everyone. It could possibly be one of the best benefits to living in the Garden of England - because your choice of scenic routes are countless. If you'd prefer to walk alone, there's also the scenic routes at attractions such as Bewl Water, Hever Castle, and Leeds Castle.

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It's never too late to get fitter

WE ALL know that keeping fit is essential as we get older. But the reality is that as our bodies start to ache, it is as much a case of mental strength as physical to get active.

For so many, the prospect of exercise is a hurdle too far - even if, ultimately, it would actually help ease those aching joints and give you more get up and go.

The good news, however, is that organisations are becoming only too aware of the arguments and are doing more and more to make it easier than ever to get into good routines.

Because not only are their obvious health benefits but the social aspect of taking part in exercise can make a big difference too.

"Staying active and socially connected beyond the age of 50 is essential for good health," says Andrew Scott-Clark, Kent County Council's director of public health.

"It can help build strength, increase mobility and improve heart and lung health in a way that will reduce the risk of serious diseases like cancer, diabetes and heart disease.

"It also gives people the chance to meet up and make new friends and reduce the mental health issues associated with social isolation."

Understandably, it might be a little intimidating joining a new fitness class but classes specifically for the over 50s are on the increase.

Rosie Whitlock Bain, a personal trainer at Reynolds Fitness Group, which has spas in Bexley, Rainham and Sittingbourne, explains: "Once you reach over 50, or even 35, your metabolism decreases and it's harder to lose weight as we retain more fat. Staying generally active is a good way to improve this. Obviously activity levels will depend on the individual but classes like Zumba gold use sliding instead of jumping to avoid impact on joints like knees and hips.

"It is also great for social wellbeing, and many of our attendees are friends, we have a little community."

In Canterbury, Active Life, which runs the district's main council-owned leisure centres, have taken active steps to make taking up regular exercise easier than ever before.

It recently struck up a partnership with the Renaissance Fitness and Wellbeing Centre in Canterbury to create the Gentle Gym. Its aim is to provide a supportive environment for anyone who is relatively inactive or has mobility issues that prevent them from using Active Life's traditional gyms.

CHOICE: Going for a run isn't the only health option - simple stretches can make a big difference too

The Gentle Gym offers a full body motor-assisted circuit where the equipment shares the workload, adjusting to individual strength and mobility. It's particularly beneficial to those recovering from joint replacements, strokes, falls, sports injuries and conditions such as arthritis, MS and Parkinson's.

"I would recommend that older adults partake in 150 minutes of moderate activity per week, so a great goal to aim for is 30 minutes, five days a week. Even if this is just so

ACTIVE: More gyms and leisure facilities are providing specialist classes for those aged over 50 - giving you the chance to tone up and keep the blood pumping

you can keep up with your grandchildren," says Christina McEwan, duty manager at Renaissance.

Alternatively, the NHS Kent Health and Wellbeing Service offer daily activities, such as health walks, or Nordic walking, perhaps for those who feel like it's too late to start when really it isn't.

Rosie Hall, 59, from Bapchild enjoys a health walk with the NHS at least three times a week: "My favourite health walk is the one at Lower Halstow which is a six mile intense walk. My weekly programme is Monday, six mile walk, Tuesday, gym, Wednesday, five mile walk, Thurdsday, gym, Friday, eight mile walk. Then at the weekends I do plenty of gardening. I've lost four stone and my BMI is down from 36 to 28. My cholesterol and blood pressure have both come right down too."

Situated in Margate is the Blue Wave Hydrotheraphy Pool and Gym, and Peter Wingrove, 57, attends the centre as part of the NHS exercise referral scheme. He says: "I do some gentle exercise in the gym two or three times a week and then I relax and swim in the hydrotheraphy pool for half an hour. The warm water eases my chronic back pain and I feel so much better for it."

Perhaps the most important lesson to learn, however, is simply that it is never too late to getting more active. And if in any doubt, simply ask those who have already taken the step about how much better they feel.

If you cannot bear the thought of heading to a gym or sports centre, then simply get up and out. Walk the dog, walk a little further every time you head to the shops, just get in the habit of doing something to get the blood pumping and your muscles moving.

Increasingly, there are more and more 'outdoor' gyms springing up - pieces of sturdy exercise equipment in public parks which are free to use and may be the perfect way to incorporate into your lifestyle.

Now is the time to get up and go. Join a class or a group and just have some fun with your exercise while maintaining that healthy lifestyle we've all been advised to work hard for.

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SPECTACULAR: Fireworks on Neptunes' Arm beach is the traditional fitting finale to the nine-day festival

Seaside festival injects dose of Rio carnival flare for 2016

Thousands set to flock to Herne Bay for event with ever growing reputation

FOR years it has lived in the shadow of its near neighbours Whitstable and its annual oyster festival knees-up. But Herne Bay is proving that those visitors should all be flocking back for more fun on the north Kent coast.

Running from August 20-28, the nine-day programme includes 80 free events, plus a selection of ticketed attractions, and aims to show-off community and arts events including workshops and talent contests for all ages.

And while the theme is always to celebrate the town, past and present, this year there will be a little South American spice in the blend as it looks to mark the Olympic Games taking place in Brazil.

Which means you can expect a little carnival flare during the event.

The festival will kick off with the Beside the Seaside family fun-day on August 20 starting at 10.30am. The fun-day will consist of a Punch and Judy performance, children's entertainers, face-painting, playground games, live music, plus a 'glamorous grandma' competition, and Baz and Dave - a Chas and Dave tribute band.

Organised for the third year by London-based events management firm Continental Drifts - best known for its work with major festivals such as the Isle of Wight's Bestival and London's Lovebox - the Brazilian vibe will be channelled through a Rio carnival lantern parade.

It will take place on the night of the opening day, Saturday, August 20. Lantern making workshops for youngsters keen to take part will be running on August 15, 16 and 18. However, places are limited and online booking is essential.

New to the festival this year is the Supercalifragilisticexplialidocious Fundraiser taking place on August 28 in Memorial Park which aims to raise money for a new community project.

Event manager for the festival, Mandy Janes, added: "I'd recommend families attend Herne Bay Live for amazing dance workshops, Herne Bay's Got Talent, Music Mayhem, and the stunning fireworks display finale. There really is something for everyone."

Herne Bay Live was the festival's most popular event last year with over 3,500 visitors and claims that it looks, so far, like it's set to be just as popular this year.

Herne Bay Rocks, which is run by local musician and resident, David Shepherd, also takes place throughout the festival. The competition decides which acts will play alongside the local headliner Coco at Herne Bay Live.

Heats for Herne Bay Rocks will start on August 19 and carry on throughout the week at local pubs and venues before the final of the competition on August 26 at the Kings Hall.

Added Mandy Janes: "We want to have yet another fabulous community event. Herne Bay is an extremely creative community with such a lot to offer which we think is showcased perfectly through the diverse and exciting programme of events."

The festival's finale will take place on Neptunes' Arm beach at 9pm on August 28. For full details and event timings, see www.hernebayfestival.co.uk.

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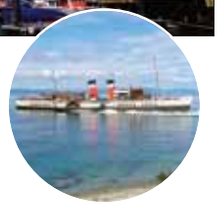

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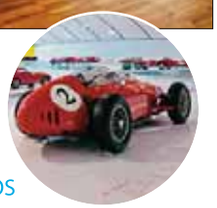

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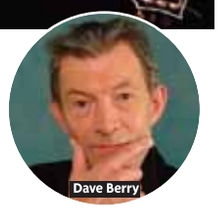

Spring Back to the 60s Party - Pontins Pakefield

Suffolk Coast - Self-Drive

Friday, 10 March, 2017 - Quote: PP3-KOS

Join us at Pontins Pakefield, on the Suffolk coast, for a Spring Party - for over 40s only - to blow away the winter cobwebs. We've lined up entertainment featuring Marty Wilde and the Wildcats, Cupids Inspiration, Glenn Darren and the Krewcats, Dave Berry PLUS The Cilla Show. Enjoy non-stop entertainment from Friday evening to Sunday evening and free drinks every night.

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Russell Kane's Right Man, Wrong Age tour announces more dates

By Emily King

emily.king@archant.co.uk

COMEDIAN Russell Kane has announced his autumn tour dates, three nights of which are in Kent.

The Right Man, Wrong Age tour is heading to The Assembly Hall, Tunbridge Wells on September 17, The Woodville, Gravesend on November 27, and Theatre Royal, Margate on November 30.

After his sold-out spring tour Kane will be letting loose another round of performances about "growing up, growing down, and why farts will always be funny".

His latest tour details his journey through fatherhood so far, and the different approaches he and his wife have towards parenting.

The Guardian's review claims the show paints "an entertaining picture of a couple with complementary energies." And that "it succeeds cheerfully in proving that, for Kane, acting one's age and being funny needn't be mutually exclusive."

Furthermore The Times gave the comedy act four stars and dubbed it as; "An evening-long fix of stand-up espresso... one of the quickest, most stimulating stand-ups in all the land."

The comedian who started his career in 2004, hit success after winning the main prize at the Edinburgh Comedy Awards at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in 2010.

Kane is now best-known for his comedic presence courtesy of frequent appearences on various TV shows as well as his stand-up.

He is the host of BBC3's Live At The Electric, he regularly appears on BBC1's Live At The Apollo, as well as BBC3's Unzipped, and ITV2's Celebrity Juice, and I'm A Celebrity Get Me Out Of Here! Now!

Furthermore, Kane has released two DVDs: Smokescreens and Castles, and Russell Kane Live, and is the new host of new BBC3 series Stupid Man, Smart Phone which is currently available on BBC iPlayer.

Tickets for this tour are available from £17 to £19 via Tickemaster or book through the venues: Tunbridge Wells, visit: theassemblyhalltheatre.co.uk or phone: 01892 530 613; Gravesend, visit: woodville.co.uk or phone: 08442 439 480; Margate, visit: theatreroyalmargate.com or phone: 01843 292 795.

FUNNY: Russell Kane's tour first hits Kent on September 17

Get set for hop festival fun

The annual Faversham Hop Festival will celebrate its 27th anniversary on September 3-4.

The two-day event will include live music, food, ale and beer stalls, accompanied by a kids entertainment, and a fun fair.

Pasquale's theatre date

COMEDIAN Joe Pasquale, star of the Royal Variety Show, and king of the ITV jungle, is back at Theatre Royal Margate on August 30.

He will be discussing all things silly and apparently attempting to open your third eye with his bunion. Tickets are available from £14 to £17.50 depending on the stage view.

Put kettle on for charity

MACMILLAN is hoping to hold the world's biggest coffee morning by inviting fundraisers to host an event in their area on August 30.

To buy coffee morning supplies visit coffee.macmillan.org.uk

Beer fest and live music

THE Plough Inn, Faversham, is having a beer and music featival on the last bank holiday weekend of this summer, August 27-29.

With promised beer, cider and cocktails throughout, everyone can enjoy the village fete outside the pub from 2pm followed by local live music acts from 2.30pm onwards.

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Wedding Fayre
11th September
2016
10am - 4pm.

May the force be with you

STORMTROOPERS will take the Horsebridge Centre, Whitstable by force on August 17 for a showing of Star Wars: The Force Awakens.

For details visit: www.horsebridge-centre.org.uk

Blow Monkeys are back

THE reformed 1980s band, The Blow Monkeys, are coming to the Duke of Cumberland, Whitstable on August 26.

The band will perform original hits, as well as new songs from their album If Not Now, When?

To book visit: thedukeinwhitstable.co.uk or ring: 0122 728 0617

Macbeth tickets on sale

NEW theatre group The Company, are putting on a show of Macbeth at the Theatre Royal, Margate in February 2017.

Tickets went on sale August 12, and can be purchased from threatreroyalmargate.com

A night with boxing royalty

BOXING legend Frank Bruno is set to make a one-off appearance at the Stag Theatre in Sevenoaks on September 3.

The former heavyweight champion will discuss his career, and the times he came face to face with Mike Tyson and Joe Bugner.

Tickets available: www.stagsevenoaks.co.uk.

First acts confirmed to hit In The Woods stage

By Emily King
emily.king@archant.co.uk

ORGANISERS of the award-winning independent music festival In The Woods have this week unveiled the first acts on its eagerly anticipated line-up.

But the location of the event - all we know for sure is that it will be somewhere in Kent - remains a closely guarded secret, with those buying tickets only being told where they will be spending the weekend, the day before.

Marking its 10th anniversary this year, the event was declared best independent festival at the 2013 AIM awards and is heading up by Charlie Andrew, who won the best producer gong at this year's Brit Awards and has worked with the likes of Alt-J and Madness.

Among those acts confirmed for this week are multi-instrumentalist Dreller and singer-songwriter Will Joseph Cook from Tunbridge Wells.

Also on the line-up will be Bad Sounds, Jennifer Evans and Sevdaliza. Further acts will be confirmed over the coming weeks.

Explains Mr Andrew: "Generally festival organisers don't have the time or means to watch every artist prior to making a booking.

"But that's precisely what we do. And that's why we consistently find the best new artists before anyone else."

Previous artists to have performed at In The Woods include Alt-J, Lianne La Havas, Young Fathers, Slaves, Years and Years, and Jack Garratt.

The acts will play across two stages accompanied by other art installations along the way.

Anna Mojab, art director for the festival has told attendees to expect a hightened sense of occasion at this year's event due to its birthday celebratory party theme.

The party continue until sunrise with locally-sourced food and beer, a silent disco, and a giant bonfire.

The festival will take place on September 2-3, and adult ticket prices are £125 for the weekend with no additional cost for camping.

For more details and to buy tickets, visit the webstie www.inthewoodsfestival.co.uk.

SECRET: The entrance to In The Woods

STARS: Artists Peter and Kerry playing the 2015 festival

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Summer by the sea with THORLEY TAVERNS

The Captain Digby

The Captain Digby is an award winning family restaurant in Thanet and one of the most popular places to visit all year round. The Digby caters for couples and families alike with fantastic views overlooking Kingsgate Bay for the adults and an indoor play area for the children. It's well worth a visit, a warm welcome awaits.

The Captain Digby, Kingsgate, Broadstairs, CT10 3QH
www.captaindigby.co.uk | 01843 867 764

Tartar Frigate

The historic Tartar Frigate is one of the only 18th century flint restaurants in Kent. Widely renowned as one of the best seafood restaurants in Kent, the Harbour restaurant boasts stunning panoramic views over Viking Bay in Broadstairs. If seafood isn't for you then you can take advantage of the extensive menu, which also includes mouth watering traditional dishes from around the world.

37-39 Harbour St, Broadstairs, Kent CT10 1EU
www.tartarfrigate.co.uk | 01843 862 013

The Charles Dickens

Welcome to the The Charles Dickens Pub. One of the largest pubs in Broadstairs, with the main bar downstairs serving great pub food, fine wine and ales and the Copperfields restaurant and bar upstairs commanding excellent views of Viking Bay. The chef's menus contain classic British ingredients, many of which are locally sourced and cooked with a modern twist.

5-6 Victoria Parade, Broadstairs CT10 1QS
www.charlesdickensbroadstairs.co.uk | 01843 600 160

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Summer superfruit which packs healthy punch

They may not look much, but there are 10 good reasons why you should be enjoying pomegranates

POMEGRANATES are proof that you shouldn't judge a fruit by its cover. They're not the most appetising fruit in the bowl, and don't even offer edible flesh - but they are packed with sweet seeds, which are extremely good for you.

In fact, they're often hailed as one of the healthiest fruits around, which is why it's been used as medicine for thousands of years.

"Pomegranates provide vitamin C, fibre and polyphenols - plant compounds which may be linked with reduced heart disease and cancer," says dietician Dr Carrie Ruxton. "However, much of the evidence on pomegranates is in animals or small groups of people, so we still don't know whether pomegranates really have clinical effects.

"But this is no reason to avoid eating them, as pomegranates are great on their own or sprinkled on a salad or breakfast cereal. They are naturally sweet too, and could help people to reduce their added sugar intake."

Here are 10 reasons to include pomegranate in your diet...

1. There are around 600 seeds, or arils, in one pomegranate, and they're packed with vitamin C - the seeds from just one fruit provide about 40 per cent of your daily vitamin C requirement.

2. Pomegranates are also full of fibre, protein, vitamins K, folate and potassium.

3. The fruit - classed as a berry - is rich in the phenol antioxidant ellagic acid, which is thought to have anti-cancer properties, although these have not yet been proven.

TASTY: And packed with nutrional goodness for you

4. The polyphenols found in pomegranate extract have been found to reduce inflammation, which can help lower the risk of many chronic diseases including Alzheimer's, arthritis, Type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

5. Pomegranate's anti-inflammatory agents are also thought to help the skin resist cell damage caused by UVA and UVB rays.

6. Flavonols found in pomegranates are thought to help block the inflammation that contributes to the destruction of cartilage.

7. A study by the University of Auvergne in France last year found pomegranate strengthened bones and helped prevent osteoporosis - although the study was only done on mice.

8. Drinking a daily glass of pomegranate juice significantly slowed the progress of prostate cancer for men in whom the disease recurred, according to a 2006 University of California study.

9. Evidence suggests that drinking pomegranate juice daily may help lower blood pressure.

10. A 2004 Israeli study on patients with narrowing of the arteries found a daily glass of pomegranate juice over three years reduced the damage caused by cholesterol in the artery by almost half, and also cut cholesterol build-up.

Smugglers come alive

THE Gulbenkian Youth Theatre has transformed the stories of east Kent's sumggling past into songs and script.

Some of the performances, from a sharing day at the theatre, have been filmed and will feature at the Seaside Museum, Herne Bay from September 18 as part of a Smuggling Tales exhibition, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

General admission is £2 for adults and children under 16 go free.

Folk powerhouse date

ENGLISH traditional folk group, Eliza McCarthy and The Wayward Band, has announced a stop at the Theatre Royal, Margate during their 13-date Big Machine November tour.

The band will play on November 17 and standard tickets are available from the box office for £18 (concession tickets are also available) and all age groups are welcome.

To book online: theatreroyalmargate.com

Hever's homegrown

HANDMADE and Homegrown Festival plans to do as its title suggests and celebrate all handmade and homegrown in Kent.

Visitors to Hever Castle, Edenbridge, will be able to browse the work of over 40 local businesses selling produce such as soaps, jewellery, ceramincs and homewares. Food marquees will also be available for sampling some cheeses, chocolates, and more.

Standard admission prices will be applied.

Wrotham's got talent

LIVE music will take place across Wrotham throughout the bank holiday weekend, August 26-29.

The Wrotham Festival will highlight local talent including The Rosie Pennie Band who will be performing rock and soul classics.

Admission to acts playing during the weekend is free, except for The Rosie Pennie Band, which will be £9.50 but will include entry to The Buttery for a BBQ. Music starts at 8pm.

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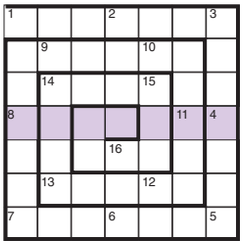
For details of the amazing line up for both shows, times, directions and ticket sales visit:
www.sandwichshowground.co.uk
Keep up to date with all the acts on
Sandwich Showground & Ash Road, Sandwich, Kent CT13 9JB & 01304 612681

PUZZLES

Word Spiral



Starting from 1, fill in the grid clockwise with four-letter words. The last letter of each word becomes the first letter of the next to reveal the key word in the shaded boxes.

1. Magician's stick
2. Diesel oil
3. Travel permit
4. Assert
5. Encircle
6. Insect
7. Brass instrument
8. Curved structure
9. Bird
10. Military cap
11. Skin irritation
12. Pile
13. Stopper
14. Style of dress
15. Forehead
16. Direction

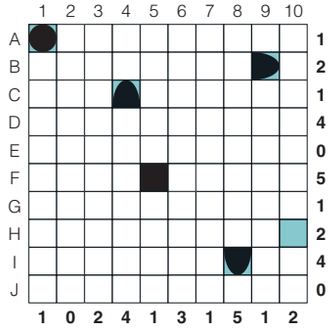
Keyword clue: A European country

Solutions

1 Wand; 2 Dev; 3 Visa; 4 Aver; 5 Ring; 6 Gnat; 7 Tuba; 8 Arch; 9 Hawk; 10 Kepi; 11 Itch; 12 Heap; 13 Plug; 14 Garb; 15 Brow; 16 West. **Keyword:** Austria

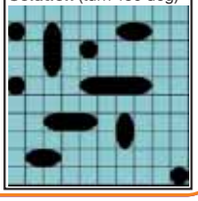
Battleships

Find where ships shown below are hidden in the grid. The numbers to the right of and below the grid indicate how many of the squares in that row are filled in with ships or parts of ships. The ships do not touch each other, even diagonally. Some of the squares have been filled to start you off.



THE FLEET
1 x Battleship
2 x Cruiser
3 x Destroyer
4 x Submarine

Solution (turn 180 deg)



DOUBLE CROSSWORD

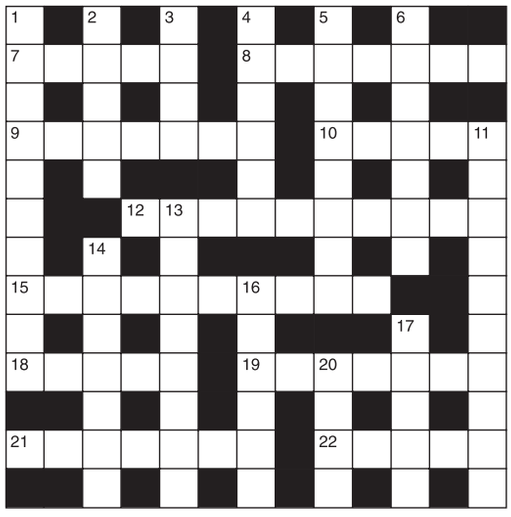
Cryptic

Across

7. I had been winning but wasted time (5)
8. Bombardment results from storm in the drinking place (7)
9. Anger with spicy smoke (7)
10. Beat currency (5)
12. Form one is A1! (5-5)
15. Unnecessarily crafty with sharp instruments (10)
18. Discover pastureland is needed by the navy (5)
19. One who listens to the accounts? (7)
21. Current exhibit (7)
22. A labyrinth that will astonish (5)

Down

1. Face round sight of a particular area (10)
2. Support about fifty boycotted by union (5)
3. Nothing to the row made by a Norse god! (4)
4. Sailor finds Elizabeth a superior lady (6)
5. Of current interest, about right, and very hot (8)
6. Note not affected (7)
11. Let off - but there's a fee of an old penny (10)
13. I make false reports about non-mainland inhabitant (8)
14. Lowered the dignity of graduates indeed! (7)
16. Tin in the pigpen is not sufficient (6)
17. Skate around a slice of meat (5)
20. The attraction of a raffle? (4)



Quick

Across

7. Foster (5)
8. Issue (7)
9. Frequenter (7)
10. Helvetian (5)
12. Past times (4,4,2)
15. Prepared (2,3,5)
18. Circular (5)
19. Supply (7)
21. Performance (7)
22. Contempt (5)

Down

1. Presiding (2,3,5)
2. Buy off (5)
3. Departed (4)
4. Vacation (6)
5. Countersign (8)
6. Sailor (7)
11. Keep mum (3,7)
13. Story (8)
14. Unwavering (7)
16. Embrace (6)
17. Trinket (5)
20. Hazard (4)

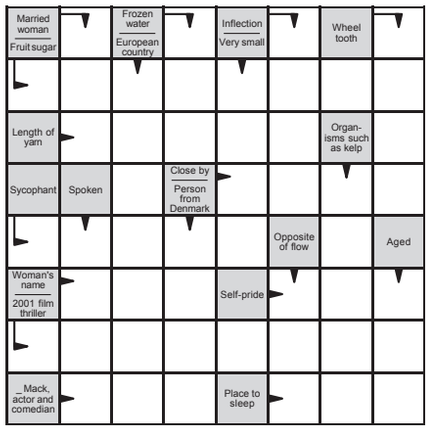
Solutions

Cryptic
Across: 7 Idled; 8 Barrage; 9 Incense; 10 Pound; 12 First-class; 15 Needlessly; 18 Learn; 19 Auditor; 21 Present; 22 Amaze. Down: 1 Divisional; 2 Black; 3 Odin; 4 Abbess; 5 Topical; 6 Natural; 11 Discharged; 13 Islander; 14 Debased; 16 Scanty; 17 Steak; 20 Draw.

Quick
Across: 7 Nurse; 8 Emanate; 9 Habitue; 10 Swiss; 12 Days gone by; 15 At the ready; 18 Round; 19 Furnish; 21 Recital; 22 Scorn. Down: 1 In the chair; 2 Bribe; 3 Left; 4 Recess; 5 Password; 6 Mariner; 11 Say nothing; 13 Anecdote; 14 Staunch; 16 Enfold; 17 Bijou; 20 Risk.

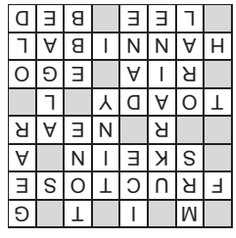
Scribble pad

ARROWWORD

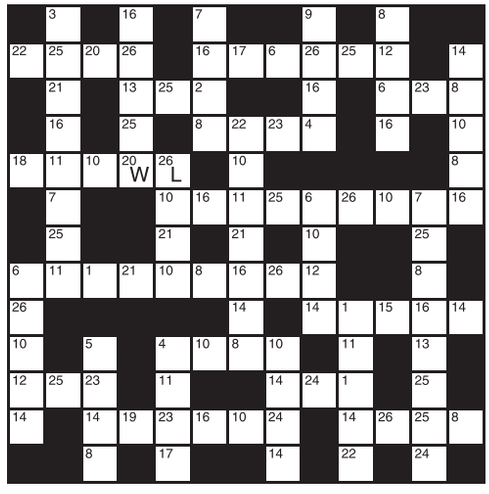


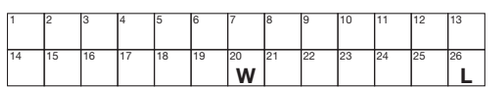
Enter your answers in the direction indicated by the arrows.

Solution



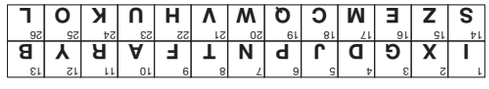
CODEWORD





This puzzle has no clues. Instead, every number printed in the grid represents a letter, with the same number always representing the same letter.
For example, if 8 turns out to be a V, you can write in V wherever a square contains 8. Using your knowledge of words, complete the puzzle.

Solution



SUDOKU

Hard

		3		4	1	6		
			8		5			
	7							3
2						3		5
				9				
4		9						2
7							4	
			9		8			
		6	3	2		1		

Easy

8	3			1			7	9
9		4				6		1
			9		7			
	9		8		5		1	
	5						6	
	2		7		1		4	
			2		9			
7		2		3		1		5
5	6						3	4

Solutions

Hard

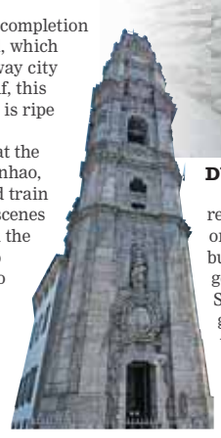
5	9	3	7	4	1	6	2	8
6	2	1	8	3	5	9	7	4
8	7	4	2	6	9	5	1	3
2	6	8	4	1	7	3	9	5
3	5	7	6	9	2	4	8	1
4	1	9	5	8	3	7	6	2
7	3	2	1	5	6	8	4	9
1	4	5	9	7	8	2	3	6
9	8	6	3	2	4	1	5	7

Easy

8	3	5	6	1	2	4	7	9
9	7	4	5	8	3	6	2	1
2	1	6	9	4	7	8	5	3
4	9	7	8	6	5	3	1	2
1	5	8	3	2	4	9	6	7
6	2	3	7	9	1	5	4	8
3	4	1	2	5	9	7	8	6
7	8	2	4	3	6	1	9	5
5	6	9	1	7	8	2	3	4

Fortified and fabulous!

One of the world's oldest wine regions is shaping up to be a top choice for a wine lover's weekend break. **SARAH MARSHALL** traces the route of liquid pleasures through Portugal's Douro Valley and Porto



DUSK: Porto and, left, the Torre dos Clergios, in the city. Pictures: PA

Gliding slowly along the motionless Douro River, we slice through near-perfect reflections of undulating hills, all etched with vine terraces resembling contours on a map. Sandeman, Taylor's, Graham's... I pick out port producers whose bottles fill my drinks cabinet at home.

We're tracing a centuries-old route used to transport the Portuguese fortified wine to the coast. These days, a flotilla of traditional rabelo boats carries tourists rather than heavy wooden casks.

The world's oldest regulated wine region, afforded Unesco World Heritage status in 2001, has been attracting river cruisers for many years, with land stays possible in a collection of simple quintas.

But, in the last 12 months, the launch of two boutique hotels has broadened the Douro's appeal. Last summer, Six Senses announced a property in Lamego as their first European outpost, and, in April, the Taylor's Port family (now part of the Fladgate Partnership) reopened Vintage House Hotel.

Coupled with the recent completion of a new mountain tunnel, which cuts journey time to gateway city Porto to an hour and a half, this scenic wine lovers' region is ripe for visiting.

Our wooden boat docks at the small, sleepy village of Pinhao, famous for its azulejo-tiled train station depicting bucolic scenes of the wine harvest. From the waterfront, it's a hop, skip and port-addled stumble to the Vintage House Hotel, where swallows flit through orange trees and trellises are festooned with magenta bougainvillea.

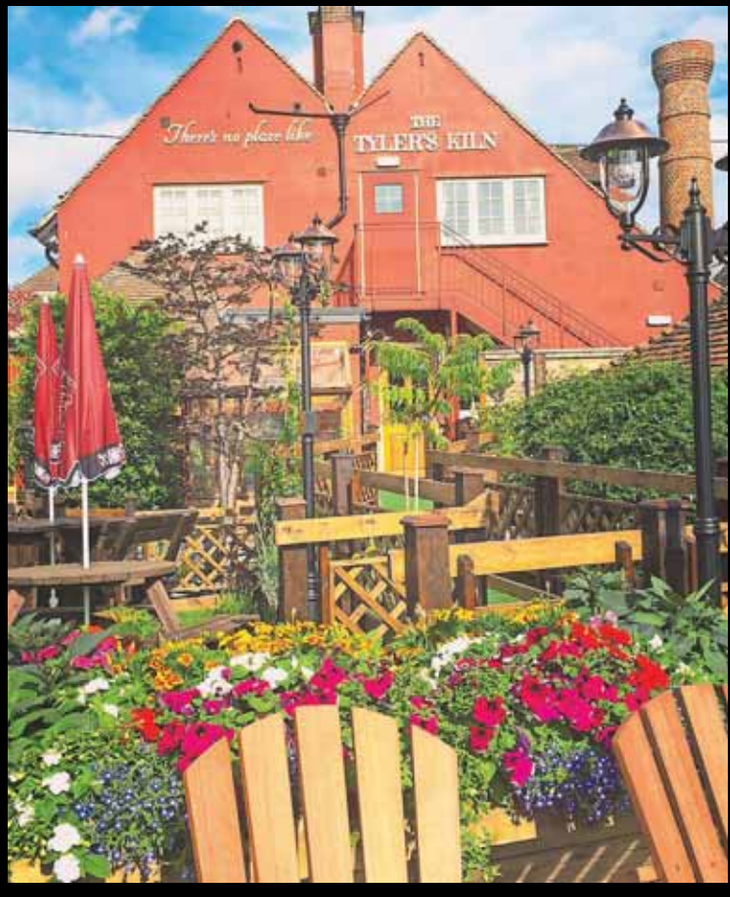
"We've worked hard to retain features of the original warehouse building," explains general manager Paulo Santos, as we admire the gnarled oak beams of the Library Room, supported by original granite columns.

The hotel's relaxed, rustic restaurant is a fine showcase for produce from the region, including lamb and veal reared in local hill villages, and peppery olive oil.

But for a real taste of the Douro's liquid assets, I visit the Fladgate Partnership's neighbouring Quinta da Roeda wine estate, where a visitor centre is housed in the former stables.

Filipe Carvalho, wine tourism manager, estimates there are 30,000 wine growers in the Douro Valley, but, since the 18th Century, land has been slowly consolidated and now British companies Taylors and Symington own 50% of it.

In the last 20 years, many young winemakers have switched to making table wine. As well as being quicker and cheaper to produce, it's also winning top industry accolades.



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Please include your name and address, although these will be withheld in exceptional circumstances, and a daytime phone number for verification (this will not be published). We reserve the right to edit all letters.

Manston needs to be developed

YOUR correspondent, P Hendry (KoS, letters, last week), seems confused about what 'we' can control when he thought that a Brexit vote and 'taking back control' meant interfering in private enterprise.

It doesn't, private companies may be bought and sold as free-market conditions permit; there are very few companies that the British government would consider strategic and would step in to prevent their sale. Neither Manston Airport nor Pilkington Glass qualify for this. As for Cadbury, since when is a sweet manufacturer of strategic importance and why would the British government have the slightest interest in who owned it?

As for Manston, why does this continue to rumble on - if there's a buyer and the seller is willing, for goodness sake let them get on with it. Somethings, and I include Dreamland in this, reach the end of their natural life and a new phase must be permitted to take place - oh, and keep public money out of it. Manston redux is never going to take off - sorry, terrible pun. If a developer wants to build houses and employment opportunities, surely this should happen - it's not as though the area is over-endowed with either.

John Ward Moorhouse,
Tunbridge Wells

This is what democracy is

RAY Duff has an odd understanding of how democracy works (KoS, letters).

In his letter he wrote: "Further, the referendum was not legally binding, merely an advisory one". What nonsense.

My advice to him is "think again chum 'cos it's going to happen". It may not have been the result he wanted, but that is true of elections generally and we don't see people running around shouting: 'the Conservatives/Lib Dems/Labour cannot run this country, the election result is only advisory'. We voted to come out and we're coming out.

As for his "un-elected head of state", this country is a constitutional monarchy, and I don't see that changing - democratically that is, any time soon. Perhaps Mr Duff has other ideas, other ways and means.

Ralph Steerpike,
Tunbridge Wells

LETTER OF THE WEEK

Something must be done to ease Dover

ON July 13, I departed Dover by coach on a ferry.

At the French border check point we disembarked to find nobody there. When two people were found they turned out not to be either British or French border staff but (British) employees of private firm G4S. Who they were working for I don't know.

On return there was a long queue of coaches and minibuses at the British check point in Calais – all of which were getting the sniffer dog treatment of luggage compartments. There were more officers (proper ones) present, but still a lot of unmanned positions.

My take on all this is that there was a lack of planning all round for the enhanced checks and they were 'caught napping' by the holiday peak – simply insufficient staffing. Made worse on the roads by all the measures like Dover TAP being about trucks and no thought given to queues of cars. In a few weeks time all these people will be coming back and our facilities at Calais and Sandgatte will be put to the test.

I repeat my call for an improved A2 with a Whitfield by-pass going directly into the docks – here a short tunnel might work.

Lastly, I was recently at a meeting of Transport Focus. Highways England were there too so I talked with their rep about Dover TAP and the hated 'permanent' speed limit. They desire a variable limit with electronic signs but that requires gantries and a power source, which cannot happen immediately. An interim measure is proposed where the speed limit is 'graduated', 60 from the present start to Court Wood, 50 from there to the hill above Aycliffe and 40 on the Aycliffe approach. Not perfect but better than what we have now. I urged them to implement sooner rather than later.

Ian Taylor
Alliance of British Drivers, Dover

Oh look - more EU bashing!

OH dear, we've rattled Ray Duff's cage and woken him from his summer slumber! If he sends me his address, I'll send him a free dictionary.

The definition of 'democracy' is government by the will of the people. Not by Ray Duff, or any others with the arrogance to believe they know better.

Even Ted Heath admitted we were railroaded into the EU on lies and treaties that were falsely called, 'tidying up exercises', but were really measures taking us even deeper into the EU.

So the British public who had actually voted for a 'common market' found, without their permission, they were now being run by 27 other countries.

A great indicator as to how corrupt and undemocratic the EU is and how poor it's governance, is that it needs to either force countries to vote again and again to get the 'right' answer, as with Ireland and Sweden, or like us, have no vote at all.

It's doubtful our supposed membership was even legal, so why do we need to officially leave? If it's so good, why are Greece, Spain, Italy, Portugal and even France, falling apart and why the queue to leave?

If the vote had been exactly reversed, Ray Duff would be walking away saying 'job done'.

But these people who pay lip service to 'democracy' cry 'foul' as soon as things don't go their way.

I would remind Ray Duff that we've had governments elected on less than 40 per cent of the vote. Did he cry 'foul' then?

Phil Granger,
West Malling

And a little bit more here too

I AM getting very annoyed with the bad losers over the EU referendum such as Ray Duff.

You lost so get over it, stop keep throwing your toys out of the pram, as the prime minister Therea May has said: "Brexit means Brexit."

There will be no re-run of the referendum, we are leaving that corrupt organisation that we have been ruled by for the last 40 years.

If it has stayed as the common market then I would have no problem with it, but we are being ruled by undemocratic, unelected, drunken presidents.

I worked very hard and donated a great deal of money to Vote Leave and we won!

I did that for my children and grandchildren so that they have a future in Great Britain and not be tied to a failing organisation which I predict will have disintegrated within ten years.

That is what they are so frightened of. Because once we have left many more countries will follow.

Switzerland has been trying to join the EU for 22 years, but has now withdrawn its application saying that only lunatics would want to be a member of that organisation now.

All the whingers who voted remain have forgotten that we are Great Britain, we did very well before we joined, and we will do even better when we leave and we will be great again.

We already have countries lining up to trade with us and we do not need to be a member of the single market to trade with Europe and have control of our borders.

So back Britain and stop talking it down.

Michael Carr,
Ashford

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AS part of our commitment to providing the best service to you, we have produced our 10 guiding principles

Kent on Sunday will:

1) Be available in every postcode in Kent.
2) Be fair, accurate and balanced.
3) Be written in clear, concise English.
4) Not be overly sensational.
5) Have a sense of humour.
6) Have an easily understood division between news, comment and advertising.
7) Seek to celebrate as well as constructively criticise.
8) Highlight topical issues of concern to people living in the county.
9) Spotlight individual cases which raise broader concerns.
10) Champion causes that it feels are important to the well-being of the county and its people.

We hope you enjoy Kent on Sunday.

images of kent

Margate seafront

by **Steven Legg from Margate**

To see your photograph printed, email **editorial@kosmedia.co.uk**,. Be sure to include your name, address and a contact telephone number. Unfortunately we cannot return any prints, and please do not send negatives.

driving

By Steve Loader
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

FORTUNE: Italian giant's luck and confidence in the medium car sector has been patchy, as regular model name changes have shown. But the Tipo shows promise

Preview: Can the Tipo turn around Fiat's fortunes?

ONE senses Fiat's frustration at a recent failure to produce a winning mid-size car.

Since saloon classics like the 124, which soldiered on as the crude yet rugged Russian Lada, and the nippy 128, the Italian giant has suffered mixed fortunes with hatchbacks at this size level.

The 1980s Ritmo was famously advertised as 'hand-built by robots' and more attractively badged here as the Strada.

But both names were dumped for the capacious Tipo in the late 1980s, which also pioneered galvanized panels to combat the corrosion that was marring Fiat's image. It became a big seller in Brazil, but the real story was clear when the name was axed in favour of the Bravo/Brava series.

Same verdict though; so the Stilo (2002-7) arrived, then came a return to Bravo (2007-14) and now the new Tipo arrives in September. Can it change Fiat's luck in the sector? Well, Fiat's marketing people would surely have preferred to shoehorn the magic number 500 into the name somewhere, so that stardust from the company's talismanic baby car could have rubbed off on it.

But the Tipo must take its chances. It does have major factors in its favour though: the hatchback and elegant Station Wagon (estate) will launch at the same time, both look good, and the range is aggressively priced and specified from just £12,995, with the 'wagon' commanding a modest £1,000 premium.

Estates are increasingly popular in the UK with many now outselling their saloon or hatchback equivalents, as would-be MPV owners realise that they want their driving pleasure back yet don't want to switch to a bulky crossover/SUV.

Fiat claims class leading legroom and boot space - 440 litres (hatch) and 550 (wagon) - and will offer two diesel and three petrol engines; automatic and dual-clutch transmissions will be available too.

» Read more of Steve's motoring reviews in…
KENT LIFE

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Suzuki unleashes fresh faced supermini

'Lightning' addition to Suzuki's small car line-up should spark an even bigger sales boom for the Japanese marque. Steve Loader takes it for a quick spin

SUZUKI has taken a completely fresh approach to the car market.

Rather than competing in every sector, it takes a guerrilla-style approach to attack key points. This nifty footwork has allowed the Japanese brand to drive its sales up by around 15 per cent so far this year, and be likely to go still higher through the recent launch of the Baleno supermini.

Incredibly, this means Suzuki now has three small hatchbacks: the capacious Celerio city car – a motoring 'Tardis' if ever there was one – the excellent Swift and now the Baleno.

The Baleno is the 'daddy' of this line-up, being slightly bigger than the Swift to tilt at 'supermini/MPVs' like the Nissan Note and Honda Jazz, and likely to attract downsizers or young families who have outgrown the Swift.

Apart from typically aggressive pricing with high specifications, starting at £12,999, the Baleno is also rewarding to drive. If perhaps not such a 'point and shoot' star as the Swift, it's still a far cry from its dreary predecessor (1995-2002).

OK, there is no 0-62mph time in the line-up below 11 seconds, despite Baleno meaning 'lightning' or 'flash' in Italian. But both powertrains are lively at the bottom end, helped by high-tensile steel used to drive down body weight – a big investment at this end of the market.

The body and underside are also low drag and another plus is some clever engine technology.

The best seller is the 110bhp 1.0-litre Boosterjet model tested here in mid-range SZ5 trim (£13,999): it revs beautifully, only revealing the typically uneven beat of its three-cylinder turbocharged layout when you abuse the throttle, tempting in cut and thrust urban driving or on the open road, where some body lean on corners reveals a suspension set more for comfort than the smaller Swift – a driving favourite.

Suzuki Baleno 1.0 Boosterjet SZ5

Price:	from £13,999
Driving appeal:	★★★★
Image:	★★★
Space:	★★★★★
Value:	★★★★★
Running costs:	★★★★★
How green?:	★★★★
Best rival:	Nissan Note

The alternative is the single 89bhp 1.2 Dualjet model. At £13,499, the starting price is £500 dearer, but its higher spec actually makes it £500 cheaper than its Boosterjet equivalent.

For that you get slightly less performance and joie de vivre, but four-cylinder smoothness assisted by a tiny electric motor – it is Suzuki's first mild hybrid and allows an official combined 70.6mpg and road tax-free CO2 emissions (94g/km). This might be a good long term bet as emissions become even more of an issue.

Whatever your engine choice though, the Baleno is a pleaser: the interior is spacious for four adults, but will seat five, and the 320-litre boot is big for this class. The Baleno cabin is robus and spacious; my only black mark is some plastics look cheap and may scratch easily.

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GIFTED: McConnochie (front row, second from the left) celebrates winning silver with Team GB's rugby sevens on Thursday night in Rio after defeat against Fiji Pictures: PA

Sevens' ace picks up silver medal

McConnochie collects county's first medal at Rio Olympics

Olympics

By Simon Allin
Simon.Allin@archant.co.uk

KENT'S Olympians secured their first medal of Rio 2016 this week when former Cranbrook pupil Ruaridh McConnochie took silver with Great Britain's rugby sevens team.

The British side beat one of the favourites, South Africa, to make it through to the final, but they were outclassed on Thursday by a dominant Fiji, who coasted to an impressive 43-7 victory.

Peter Jovanovic, chairman of Cranbrook RFC, coached McConnochie for a number of years and said he was 'immensely proud' of his achievements. He said: "At the end of the day, you never know how players are going to turn out and Rory was one of the most naturally talented individuals with skill sets that you can't really coach.

"He is just one of those guys you could see had a lot of ability and it was just dependent on what he did with that.

"The players will be thrilled to have won a silver, and the whole club is really proud of him."

Earlier in the week, eventing star William Fox-Pitt, who attended Wellesley House School in Broadstairs, saw his medal hopes dashed after slipping from first to 22nd place due to an early error and a handful of time faults.

The county has a number of other medal hopefuls in action over the weekend, as Team GB looks to build on their already impressive tally, which had outstripped their equivalent London 2012 haul after the first five days.

Tunbridge Wells windsurfing star Bryony Shaw competed last night, while Chatham's Kat Driscoll took part in the women's individual trampoline.

Maidstone-born sprinter Jack Green will fly the flag for Great Britain in the 400m hurdles this week, while Ashford's Tom Ransley is competing in the men's coxed eight finals on Saturday.

The county also has a number of players in the women's hockey team, which will compete in the quarter finals on Monday.

Sell-out crowd expected for quarter final clash

Cricket

KENT'S cricketers are facing a tough test against Yorkshire Vikings as the two sides get ready to face each other in the quarter finals of the Royal London One-Day Cup.

The Spitfires have been flying high in the competition, securing their place in the quarter finals with a seven-wicket win over Sussex.

It came after an impressive run in which they scored victories against Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Somerset and Middlesex.

The Vikings are formidable opponents, however, and they are currently riding high in third place of division one of the county championships.

They have won the county championships for two years in a row and are favourites to lift the One-Day Cup.

UNDAUNTED: Jamie Clifford says his side is not 'overawed' by Yorks.

Jamie Clifford, Kent County Cricket Club's chief executive, said: "We have had two sell-out matches this season and if not sold out, we will be close to selling out.

"The side has been playing some really good cricket and the 50-over game suits our players. They are not overawed by Yorkshire.

"I think our players have developed a style they want to keep playing. Our fast bowlers will be trying to get in amongst the wickets as early as possible, and our batting line up has a clear idea of what they want to do.

"Everyone is looking forward to it."

The match gets underway at 2pm on August 18 at the Spitfire Ground, St Lawrence, Canterbury. Adult tickets are priced at £20.

Sport Shorts

» Email **sports@kosmedia.co.uk** or call **Jamie Weir** on **01233 653481**

Gills to play Watford in League Cup round two

GILLINGHAM are to travel to Watford for their next League Cup game after drawing the Premier League side in the second round of the contest.

The Gills' season has got off to a strong start, with 3-1 wins over Southend United in both Division One and the League Cup, and they will be looking to maintain their momentum when they head to Vicarage Road.

They last played the Hertfordshire side in 2007, going down to a 3-0 away defeat. Their last victory against Watford came back in March 2003, when both teams were in Division One.

Justin Edinburgh's team will be bolstered by the arrival of former Premier League midfielder Jamie O'Hara, who has just joined the club on a two-year contract.

The League Cup clash takes place on Tuesday, August 23.

MANAGER: Justin Edinburgh

STRIKER: Lafayette is set to bolster Dover Athletic's frontline

Lafayette signing adds to Dover's strike force

FORMER Eastleigh striker Ross Lafayette is heading to Dover this season after joining The Whites on a free transfer.

The 30-year-old is the second striker signed by the club in the past two weeks, with Moses Emmanuel also joining the attacking lineup.

Lafayette began his career with Beaconsfield SYCOB, subsequently playing for several non-league clubs in north London and the home counties.

He joined Welling United in the summer of 2012, making 90 appearances for the side and scoring 39 goals, which helped them them to secure the 2012-13 Conference South title.

Lafayette joined Eastleigh in 2015 and scored two goals in 12 appearances.

Biking championship at Brands

A PACKED racing programme is in store for motorcycling enthusiasts at the British Motorcycle Racing Club Bike Championships at Brands Hatch.

The 40-race programme makes the event the largest of its type in the UK, and many of the motorcycles being exhibited will also take part in track parades.

The paddock will be open to the public, allowing fans to get a closer look at the bikes as they are prepared for action on the circuit, and to meet the teams and riders.

The event is being held on Saturday and Sunday August 20 and 21, with adult tickets priced at £10. Children can enter free of charge.

Gates open at 8am and the action kicks off at 9am on Saturday and 10am on Sunday.

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